ORTHODOXY AND HERESY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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Central BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

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Jan 1885

ORTHODOXY AND HERESY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

TEN LECTURES

ON

ORTHODOXY AND HERESY

IN THE

CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

BY

EDWARD H. HALL.

BOSTON:
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.
1883.

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ORTHODOXY AND HERESY

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CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

I.

PAUL AND THE APOSTLES.

THE terms Orthodoxy and Heresy are so familiarly used that it seems to me worth while to attach to them, if possible, a definite signification. Have they any exact meaning in relation to Christianity, and if so, what is it? What is Christian Orthodoxy, and what phases of belief come legitimately under the head of heresy? To answer these questions is the purpose of the present course of lectures. If in accomplishing this purpose the lectures shall also aid in answering the further question, Is Orthodoxy of faith essential to Christianity? or the question larger still, Is dogma a necessary part of religion? the entire object of the course, as it now lies in my mind, will be attained.

The first point to be made, in carrying out this plan, is to determine the meaning of Christian Orthodoxy. The term heresy, as commonly used, has no meaning unless the religion in question has an established and authorized

system of doctrines. Had Christianity such a system at the beginning, and if not, when did it form one?

To determine this point, we must look first at the very beginnings of the Christian Church. I invite you this evening, therefore, to glance with me at Christianity as held by its first disciples; by the Apostles of Christ themselves. Here are the historical records; very scanty it is true, and often vaguest where we should wish to have them most exact; and yet, scanty as they are, containing far more than is commonly discovered. I propose to look carefully, to-night, at the pages of the New Testament, and will do my best neither to put anything of my own into them, nor to extort from them any meaning which is not fairly theirs.

Exactly how soon after the death of Jesus the Apostles gathered again at Jerusalem, we cannot tell; for all the memories of this period, as is quite natural, were vague and confused, and the dates in the Book of Acts are as uncertain as the events described are misty and phantom-like. No better illustration could be given of the state of mind common to all who passed through the exciting scenes of Christ's seizure and crucifixion, than the conflicting statements as to the time which elapsed before what is called his ascension. This event, unknown to Matthew, to John, and to Mark,[1] but mentioned twice by the writer of Luke and Acts, is described in the one case[2] as happening within one day of the Resurrection, in the

[1] The last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel are commonly pronounced spurious. [2] Luke xxiv. 1, 13, 36, 51.

other,[1] as happening after forty days. In other words, when these two books were written, it was already forgotten whether Jesus was with his disciples, after his crucifixion, for twenty-four hours or for more than a month.

The one thing which is clear in the early chapters of Acts is, that the Apostles were gathered in Jerusalem, and were living in daily expectation of their Master's return. The crucifixion, as you know, had astonished and scattered them. It brought not only terror but despair; for it seemed, at the moment, a final blow to all their hopes. So firmly rooted in their minds was the belief, long traditional among the Jews, that their Messiah would not die, but was to re-establish on earth the Kingdom of Israel, and subject all nations to Jehovah's sway, that their first feeling was that they had been wholly deceived. "We trusted it had been he," they said, "which should have redeemed Israel."[2] The crucifixion thus forced upon them this stern alternative; either Jesus was not the Messiah, or he had not really or finally died, but had passed up directly into heaven, to return as he had promised, "before that generation should pass," to establish himself on earth as king.

Which side of this alternative they chose, we all know. Their faith in Jesus proved stronger than all their forebodings, and they came together again in Jerusalem, as he had bidden them, to await his speedy coming. The state of feeling with which they met appears plainly from an examination of the language which all the writers of this

[1] Acts i. 3. [2] Luke xxiv. 21.

period employ. With the idea of heaven then prevailing as a local spot above the clouds, inhabited by God and his angels, it was easy for the Jew to conceive of Jesus as having been snatched up into the skies, where he would sit "at the right hand of God,"[1] until the time arrived when he should come down "in like manner as they had seen him go up into heaven,"[2] and mount the Messiah's throne. Everything indicates this expectation. Christ's coming is not spoken of in these pages as an event which has already occurred, but as something still to be. The tense is not past but future. The Messiah has not "come," he "is coming." "The Lord *shall send* Jesus Christ which was preached unto you," says Peter in healing the lame man.[3] Such expressions as "Waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus," "Waiting for the Lord," "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh," "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord," are constantly met in all the writings of this age. It is an hour of intense expectancy, with all the high-wrought feeling and excited imagination which always characterize such hours. They are waiting for their Lord. Every unusual event seems startling, providential, miraculous. Every stir in the elements might be the descent of the Holy Ghost which he had promised; every breath of wind, his coming down from the skies whither he had ascended.

The religious organization of this little band of primitive Christians seems to have corresponded wholly with their religious faith. Various sects have been at pains to trace

[1] Acts ii. 33. [2] Acts i. 11. [3] Acts iii. 20.

back their ecclesiastical forms to these early days. In reality, I suppose, the simplest organization ever thought of in our own times is far too complicated for the Apostolic age. Indeed, why should we look for any distinct organization at all? "The time was short." "The day of the Lord was to come as a thief in the night." It might be a few years, it might be a few months, it might be but a few days, ere the Son of Man should appear. What motive was there then for establishing special rites, or ecclesiastical offices, or sacred places, or holy days?

Plainly, nothing of the kind was done. Judging at least from the evidence before us, the disciples of Jesus continued as before, living and worshipping among their fellow Jews, sharing the universal expectation of a Messiah, differing from their fellow-countrymen only in considering Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah, and cherishing his glorious image in their hearts. There is no proof that as yet, or until they were forced to do so, they separated themselves openly from other Jews, or showed any disposition to forsake Jewish observances. Apparently, they considered themselves the true Israel. They still read and quoted the Mosaic Scriptures, they still baptized their converts into the Jewish Church, they were found "daily with one accord in the Temple,"[1] they observed the Jewish Pentecost,[2] Passover,[3] and Sabbath,[4] they performed Jewish vows,[5] they were faithful to the Jewish hours of prayer,[6] they "abstained from meats offered to idols, and from

[1] Acts ii. 46. [2] Acts ii. 1; xx. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 8. [3] Acts xx. 6. [4] Acts xiii. 42, 44; xvi. 13; xvii. 2; xviii. 4. [5] Acts xviii. 18; xxi. 23–26. [6] Acts iii. 1; x. 9.

blood, and from things strangled,"[1] they surrendered with great reluctance, and only in course of time, the rite of circumcision.[2] They were as yet a family rather than a church; a domestic, not an ecclesiastical group. "All that believed were together, and had all things common;" "breaking bread from house to house, they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."[3] In later times, when they had ceased longer to expect Jesus, and began only to remember him, this simple ceremony of the "breaking of bread" assumed a memorial form, and became, after a few years, the Lord's Supper. But not at first. For a time his followers were wholly absorbed in the hope of his coming; they were looking forward, not backward. They were Jews still, with a fine expectation in their souls.

Such was primitive Christianity. Such for the first eight or ten years of its existence, at least, was the Christian Church, if Church it could yet be called. Nor was its doctrinal faith less primitive than its form. No one who reads the accounts of the first preaching of the Apostles, and notices the appeals by which they won their first converts, can fail to be struck by the limited range and extreme simplicity of their discourses. Of the higher thought which Jesus had spoken, no hint is to be found. Their one consideration seems to have been, not the future growth of Christianity, but the immediate change which was impending. The single theme, reiterated in many forms, which seems to have covered the whole ground of

[1] Acts xv. 29. [2] Acts xv. 1; xvi. 3; Gal. vi. 12. [3] Acts ii. 44, 46.

their ministry, was this : Jesus is the Messiah ; he will speedily come ; repent and be baptized in his name.

But it was impossible for this state of things to last. Narrow and unspiritual as were these first teachings, still the higher thought was there, for it had certainly been spoken, and was waiting then for further utterance. Not every one had forgotten it, or failed to comprehend it. Among those who joined in the Jewish ceremonials, some there must have been who were carrying in their hearts those better words, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath," "Ye hypocrites, who pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin," "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." It was only necessary for some soul to appear, responsive to these nobler utterances, and conscious of their inconsistency with the Mosaic faith, and the little Christian community would learn a larger Gospel. It was simply a question of time when the new truth should come to an open break with the old.

The first warning note of the inevitable conflict came from a quarter whence one would least have expected it. While Peter, John, and James preached their gospel among the Jews without exciting hostility, the first serious offence seems to have been caused by one of a little group of subordinates who had been appointed, somewhat contemptuously perhaps, to "serve the tables," and wait upon the widows, while the Twelve gave themselves "to prayer and the ministry of the word."[1] Lowly as was their office, one

[1] Acts vi. 2–4.

among their number rose at once above the very Apostles who had so haughtily assigned them their work.

The fate of Stephen, the first martyr, is a familiar story; I ask you now simply to notice the exact cause of his violent death. That he preached Jesus as the Messiah could not have been his offence in the eyes of the Jews, for Peter and John had long taught this without being stoned. The charge against him was a more serious one, — "We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us."[1] In other words, Stephen was the first to be put to death, because he was the first to catch the more spiritual purport of Jesus' words, and set them in contrast with the Mosaic ceremonial. Quoting, perhaps, such sayings as these, "In this place is one greater than the Temple;"[2] quoting from their own Scriptures, "The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands,"[3] — Stephen, like his Master before him,[4] was charged with blasphemy, and when he bravely refused to retract, he was stoned to death for having spoken "against Moses and against God."

Stephen's death, however, beautiful and heroic as it was, gains its chief significance from the consequences to which it led, and the impression which its heroism seems to have made upon one greater than himself, or one at least with larger opportunity to carry forward the truth for which Stephen had become a martyr. This is not the place for a full account of Paul's ministry; yet

[1] Acts vi. 14. [2] Matt. xii. 6. [3] Acts vii. 48. [4] Matt. xxvi. 61.

it is important to notice, just at this point, the exact circumstances of his actual entrance as a teacher and worker into the Christian community.

Paul's apostleship by no means began immediately upon his conversion, nor was his conversion itself the instantaneous thing it might at first appear. Like all genuine spiritual changes, it was evidently a gradual process, culminating, no doubt, in one startling experience, but prepared for, as we have seen, by the incidents of Stephen's death as well as by a general acquaintance with Christian teachings, and followed by a long period of apparent solitude and reflection. According to his own account, he first spent three years in Arabia and Damascus, either feeling as yet no call to engage openly in the new cause, or not wholly at home in it, went then to Jerusalem to consult with the leading Christian Apostles, met with no warm welcome from them, but only with suspicion and fear, and finally retired, as if in discouragement, to his native Tarsus, where he remained until certain new developments brought him into active service.[1]

After the death of Stephen, the little community at Jerusalem became naturally the object of greater suspicion on the part of the Jews, and finally of a general persecution, which does not seem to have affected the Apostles, but which drove many of the more zealous members abroad "throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria,"[2] "as far as Cyprus and Antioch."[3] But here arose at once a new perplexity. Hitherto, as we have seen, the

[1] Gal. i. 17–18; Acts ix. 26–30. [2] Acts viii. 1. [3] Acts xi. 19.

whole movement had been carried on within the Jewish church, nor did any of the Apostles seem to have considered that their mission extended beyond it. Recalling, perhaps, certain words of Jesus himself,[1] they evidently regarded the coming of the Messiah as in consequence of the promise made to the chosen people, and therefore as concerning them alone. Acting on this principle when they first left Jerusalem, they soon found themselves, for the first time, face to face with Greeks, and some of their number ventured to preach the Lord Jesus, and offer the blessings of his Messiahship, even to them.[2] At once rumors of this bold proceeding reached the Apostles at Jerusalem, to whom the action seemed so grave and the moment so critical, that Barnabas, one of the most trustworthy of their followers, was instantly sent to Antioch, where the new movement had begun, to take the matter in charge. Barnabas in turn, with this new and serious responsibility upon him, seems to have bethought himself of the zealous convert, whom the Apostles had regarded with so much suspicion, but whose worth he had recognized from the first, and who was then in retirement at Tarsus. Saul, visited thus in person by Barnabas, and called to the new field which had opened outside of Jerusalem, entered willingly upon the work, and found himself, as events proved, exactly where his help was most needed, and his powers could be turned to best account.[3] His special mission was obvious at once.

[1] Matt. x. 5, 6; xv. 24. [2] Acts xi. 19, 20. [3] Acts xi. 22–26; ix. 26, 27.

But few years passed after Saul's entrance upon his labors, before an event occurred which proved how well Barnabas had chosen, and how sorely the Apostles needed precisely the element among them which the new convert brought. The new experiment which had been initiated at Antioch, of preaching the gospel to Gentile as well as Jew, and inviting both to enter the heavenly kingdom on equal terms, was by no means regarded with universal favor. On the contrary, it was held by many to be subversive, as it really was, of the ancient faith, and caused nowhere greater scandal than in Jerusalem, in the sacred circle of the Apostles themselves. Alarmed at the rumors which reached their ears, they sent messengers to Antioch, who were dismayed at discovering a far greater looseness and freedom than they had supposed. They even found that converts were admitted into the church without being circumcised; and felt called upon to tell the followers of Barnabas and Paul, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." [1]

The council at Jerusalem which resulted from this visit, and which is so differently narrated in Acts xv. and Galatians ii.,[2] was evidently the most important event in the early history of the church; and the singular asperity with which it was conducted shows how serious a point was involved in its discussions. Paul himself, in writing of it to the

[1] Acts xv. 1.

[2] The discrepancy between these two accounts has long been familiar to Bible students, and has defied all attempts at reconciliation. In choosing between them we are justified, of course, in following the statements of Paul himself.

Galatians, about sixteen years later, betrays plainly enough, by the exceptional severity and sarcasm of his tone, how deeply he had been wounded, and how angry an opposition he had encountered at the hands of the Jerusalem Apostles. The messengers whom they had sent to Antioch to examine into its affairs, he calls "false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage;"[1] speaking of the Apostles themselves, he says "those who *seemed to be somewhat* (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person)," "James, Cephas, and John, who *seemed to be pillars;*"[2] while throughout the whole account Paul is anxious to show the great difference of opinion between himself and the Apostles, and to prove how little he allowed himself to be influenced by them.

The meaning of all this is unmistakable, and the attitude in which Paul appears is admirable. Nothing in his whole career brings out so clearly the strength of his character, or the intensity and persistency of his purpose, as this first great triumph over official blindness and bigotry. The picture is a striking one. On the one side were Peter, James, and John, the personal followers of Jesus, who had heard his words and been eye-witnesses of his career, who had been chosen to represent him and still bore unchallenged the sacred title of "Apostles," yet who honestly believed that the gospel was to the Jews, that every one who accepted it must accept also the whole Law of Moses,

[1] Gal. ii. 4. [2] Gal. ii. 6–9.

that the rite of circumcision, the eating of certain meats, and the observance of Sabbaths and feast days, as being part of the Law of Moses, were as incumbent upon the follower of Christ as upon the Jew himself, and that to admit Gentiles into the kingdom on equal terms was to falsify all the promises of the Fathers. On the other side appeared this new and almost unknown convert, but just now their malignant persecutor; this recent comer into their ranks, who had never heard or seen Jesus, who claimed no official authority whatever, yet who dared boldly to dispute their word and deny their interpretation of the new faith, to challenge the sanctity of the Mosaic Law, and claim exemption from its "bondage" in the name of Christ, to take open ground against the necessity of circumcision, and to claim for himself the same right to preach to the Gentiles which the Jerusalem Apostles had to preach to the Jews. On the one side, official dignity and traditional authority; on the other, the force of personal conviction. It is proof enough of Paul's strength, that in the unequal conflict he carried the day. It is a happy thing for Christianity that in this first great struggle between the letter and the spirit, the cause of Christian freedom found so resolute a champion. Paul did not win the Apostles over to his belief; but he secured their recognition and indorsement of his work. They consented that the field should be divided between themselves and him. "When James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we

should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."[1]

That I have not exaggerated either the importance of this event, or the gravity of the dissension between Paul and his opponents, is amply proved by the frequent allusions to these very points in Paul's several Epistles. The danger that his followers would feel themselves still bound by the Jewish Law seemed constantly upon his mind. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing."[2] "Why turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days and months, and times and years."[3] "One believeth that he may eat all things: another who is weak eateth herbs." "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike."[4] "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh."[5] "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit."[6] "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath."[7]

Certain passages prove that sides were early taken on this great question, and parties threatened the unity of the young church. "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is

[1] Gal. ii. 9. [2] Gal. v. 1, 2. [3] Gal. iv. 9, 10. [4] Rom. xiv. 2, 5. [5] Rom. ii. 28. [6] Phil. iii. 3. [7] Coloss. ii. 16.

Christ divided?"[1] "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and avoid them."[2] Equally significant are other passages which indicate either that Paul was strangely sensitive as to his official title, or else, as is far more likely, that his opponents strove to lessen his authority by denying him the name of Apostle, and taunted him with the fact that he had received no commission from Jesus himself. "Paul, an Apostle, not of men, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father."[3] "Am I not an Apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?"[4] "I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles." "For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles."[5]

The character of the opposition which Paul encountered through life, and the source from which it came, appear in passages like these, — "His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." "Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ."[6] "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you unto another gospel." "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."[7] "They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."[8] "*Are they Hebrews?* so am I. *Are*

[1] 1 Cor. i. 12. [2] Rom. xvi. 17. [3] Gal. i. 1. [4] 1 Cor. ix. 1.
[5] 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 11. [6] 2 Cor. x. 10; xi. 13. [7] Gal. i. 6, 9.
[8] Rom. xvi. 18.

they Israelites? so am I. *Are they ministers of Christ?* I am more."[1]

Indeed, the most striking fact connected with Paul's whole ministry is that which this last passage so explicitly states; that the hostility which so constantly pursued him, which baffled his projects and maligned his name, and denounced his doctrines and stole from him the hearts of his followers, arose not from among the Jews whom he had left, but from among the Christians to whom he came. His bitterest foes were within the Church itself. This fact has already appeared; it is still more clearly proved by his experiences during his last visit to Jerusalem. The other Apostles, as we have seen, had dwelt in Jerusalem for years in perfect quiet and safety. Not even the persecutions connected with Stephen's death had disturbed them. No sooner, however, did Paul appear than they were filled with alarm for his safety. They reminded him how many Christians there were in Jerusalem who still clung to the Law, and who distrusted him because of his giving up circumcision.[2] They besought him to silence these prejudices by taking upon himself a vow, and shutting himself up for seven days in the Temple, that the people might see how faithfully he kept the Law.[3] Their fears proved well-grounded and their precautions useless. The instant Paul was seen in the Temple he was seized by the multitudes, drawn from the Temple, beaten, and was on the point of being killed, when he was rescued by the Roman soldiery.[4] Seized and beaten, not because he was

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 22, 23. [2] Acts xxi. 20, 21. [3] Acts xxi. 23–26. [4] Acts xxi. 27–32.

a Christian, else Peter and James and John would long before have been seized; but because, like Stephen before him, he "taught the Jews to forsake Moses;" "because he taught all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place."[1] In other words, Paul was persecuted, if these narratives are correct, not by Jews, but by Jewish Christians.

This hostility to Paul and his anti-Jewish teachings, does not seem to have ceased with his death. Indeed, there are some indications that it was more than a century before this early antagonism was forgotten, and the Christian Church admitted Paul to an equal place in its esteem with his fellow-apostles. Five or six years after his death, the church at Ephesus is praised by the writer of the Revelation for having "tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and found them liars;[2]" while in nearly all the "seven churches which are in Asia," the very offences are pointed out which were commonly charged upon Paul's teachings.[3] Among the churches which he had founded, some, we are told, were made to forget his name; among the earlier writers, some allude to him as a "teacher of error," while others quietly ignore him. As late as the middle of the second century, a curious book appeared, under the name of the "Clementine Homilies," purporting to give a series of disputes between the Apostle Peter and the heretic Simon Magus, in which there is little doubt that under the disguise of Simon Magus, Paul himself is intended and exposed to reprobation. He is

[1] Acts xxi. 21–28. [2] Rev. ii. 2. [3] Rev. ii, iii.; comp. 2 Tim. i. 15.

represented as corrupting the teachings of Peter, and bringing in false doctrines. "Some there were," says Peter, "who rejected my teachings, and followed the unlawful and worthless doctrine of one hostile to me. Even during my life, some undertook, by artificial interpretation, to twist my precepts into the overthrow of the Law." In another place, as if in allusion to Paul's claim to have received his inspiration through visions, Peter says, "Can one become an Apostle through a vision? If thou in a single hour couldst be made a teacher by a vision, why then should Christ have remained with his disciples and taught them for an entire year?"[1]

Indeed, these opponents of Paul and his doctrines became by degrees a sect. In later times, when Paul's idea of Christianity had won a tardy acceptance, they were pronounced heretics under the name of Ebionites. The Ebionites were those Christians of the second and third centuries who regarded Christianity as "Judaism perfected by a few additional precepts;"[2] who claimed that the Mosaic Law was still in force; who looked towards Jerusalem when they prayed; who believed in circumcision; who kept the Jewish Passover; who looked upon Jesus as simply a man distinguished above others for legal piety and so becoming Lawgiver and Messiah, and to be classed with Moses and the Prophets; and finally,

[1] Quoted in Baur's Christenthum der ersten drei Jahrhunderte i. 80, 81. Comp. also Neander's History of Christian Church, i. 353–361.

[2] Neander, i. 344; Bleek's Introduc. to N. Test. i., 113.

who hated the Apostle Paul and rejected his Epistles. In a word, the Ebionites were the legitimate successors and exact counterparts of the party that arrayed itself against Paul while Paul still lived. In the fourth century they are heretics ;[1] in the first century they are the Apostles at Jerusalem.

Such then was the first great struggle within the Christian Church. In these days, when Christianity, though still somewhat "entangled with the yoke of bondage," has yet learned to claim with pride that its message is a universal one, and when no one denies that within Christian limits "is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female," it is difficult for us to carry our imaginations back to the time when this point was still at issue. Yet it is well for us to remember this. It is well for us to remember that for more than a century it was an open question whether Christianity was to be a new Jewish sect, or a new religion. And it is well for us to recall some of the bitter conflicts by which the question was decided. For nearly a hundred years the church founded by the Apostles at Jerusalem, according to one ancient account at least, could be called Hebrew or Christian indifferently, and assumed a distinctively non-Jewish character only after its re-establishment in Jerusalem under Hadrian.[2] The emancipation of Christianity from the bonds of Judaism, the vindication of its separate right to be, was

[1] Baur, i. 157 ; Renan's Évangiles, 44–54 ; Gibbon's Roman Empire, ii. 67.

[2] Eusebius, B. iv. ch. 5, 6.

not the work of a day or an hour, but ran with varying and uncertain result through, and far beyond, the life of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. While he lived the question was determined by the sheer weight of his invincible personality; after his death it was mainly the impulse he had given it, and the noble words he left behind him, which carried the problem to its triumphant conclusion.

No one who cares for his Christian faith can refuse his interest to the hours when this point was still undecided; his sympathy to those who so valiantly fought for what long seemed a hopeless cause; or his gratitude to the great leader who, against overwhelming odds, maintained the cause of spiritual freedom, and pledged Christianity to the largest service.

December 14, 1873.

II.

VIEWS OF THE EARLY CHURCH CONCERNING CHRIST.

MY present lecture grows naturally out of the preceding. In glancing at the early church, so far from finding a fixed ecclesiastical form or definite theological doctrines at the start, we found the first generation of believers engaged in a serious controversy. One of the most vital questions that could arise was still undecided, and threatened to divide the infant Church in twain; the question whether Christianity was to be merely a modification of Judaism, or a distinct religion addressed to all who would receive it. The immediate disciples of Jesus, strongly Jewish in their feelings, as they had been during their Master's life, regarded Christianity as simply a new development of the Mosaic faith; while the new-comer, Paul, seeing at once the larger meaning of the truth to which he was converted, insisted upon welcoming Gentiles as well as Jews, on the single condition of their belief in Christ. The question was too important to be left unsettled, yet the differences were too great to be reconciled in an hour. In fact, the history of the first century of Christianity is mainly the

record of the struggles by which Christianity vindicated its right to a name and a career of its own.

But this controversy involved, of course, much more than the one question of admitting Gentiles to the church without circumcision. It involved the nature and character of Jesus himself. According to one of these two parties, Jesus was simply the long-expected Messiah of the Jews; according to the other, he was a religious teacher, and the divine messenger of a new faith. We cannot be surprised, therefore, to find this question a very prominent one in those early years; and to find also many conflicting views of Christ's nature among his followers, before a definite and generally accepted opinion was reached. To trace the more interesting of these early views is my purpose to-night.

As I have just intimated, the entire controversy concerning Christ's nature, which has continued unbroken in the Christian church down to our own day, originated in the twofold conception of his person and his office which existed while the church was forming. Indeed, this twofold conception appears plainly in the Christian Scriptures themselves, written as they were during the first half-century or century of the growth of the church. The generation which first had written Gospels and Epistles in their hands found imbedded in them at least two distinct views of the nature of Jesus. As this point is of great importance to the further discussion, let me state it as plainly as my space allows.

In the first three Gospels, which, although composed

later than some of Paul's Epistles, yet represent, in the original material from which they are drawn, the earliest existing narratives and impressions of Christian times, Jesus appears in strictest sense as the Jewish Messiah. His family register stands upon the first page, proving him an anointed King or Messiah in regular descent from the house of David. As we read on, we find frequent allusions to "the Kingdom," "the Kingdom of God," "the Kingdom of Heaven," "Kingdom of our father David," "Children of the Kingdom;" all these being current designations of the Kingdom of the Messiah. As we read too, we find such words as these: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[1] "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[2] "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil."[3] In these pages too, more fully than elsewhere, we find quotations from the Jewish Scriptures, to prove that the ancient prophecies found their fulfilment at last in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

In the first three Gospels then, Jesus appears exclusively as the Jewish Messiah or Christ. And the Jewish Messiah, I need not remind you, was never thought of except as a man. Indeed, to the purely Jewish mind, trained for centuries to think of Jehovah as in absolute isolation from his human subjects, no other thought could well present itself; and certainly none other is found in all

[1] Matt. x. 5, 6. [2] Matt. xv. 24. [3] Matt. v. 17.

the Jewish Scriptures, or in the New Testament writings which most reflect the Jewish spirit. According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus was a purely human Messiah. They give, as we have seen, his human descent, with domestic incidents of his life, they record his Temptation, his gradual recognition of his coming fate, the agony of the garden, the exclamation of despair upon the cross. They represent him as foretold by the prophets, indeed, but foretold only as an anointed King. They call him the Son of God, but this was simply an Old Testament designation of the Messiah.[1] Two of these Gospels speak of a miraculous birth, and descent of the Holy Spirit from heaven at his baptism; but this would only make him a greater Messiah than any before. He wrought miracles, it is true; but so, according to the Jewish Scriptures, had Moses and Samuel, and Elijah and Elisha, — human beings all of them. Indeed, so did many of the Jews still living, by the testimony of Jesus himself. "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?"[2] It is quite safe to say that throughout the first three Gospels, Jesus is in no single passage ranked above humanity.

The moment we turn, however, from these Gospels to the Epistles of Paul, we find ourselves in another region of thought and faith. Paul, as we have seen, found the views held by the Apostles at Jerusalem too narrow for him, and claimed for his great teacher a nobler work than simply the re-establishment of the Jewish kingdom. And

[1] Ps. ii. 7. [2] Matt. xii. 27.

not only the mission of Christianity but also the person of Jesus began to assume, to Paul's thought, a higher dignity, and quite supernatural glory. How gradually this transformation took place in Paul's mind his writings give interesting proof; where it is not impossible to trace the successive steps by which the popular conception of Jesus as the national Messiah passed into mystic visions of a being in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt. In his earlier epistles it is difficult to distinguish his views on this point from those which prevailed about him. He begs the Thessalonians to be ready for "the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints," [1] and assures them that those who had already died, or should die before that event occurred, although in their graves, should share in the kingdom as well as those who were still alive. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." [2]

But such conceptions as this could not long satisfy a mind like Paul's; and certain mystic phrases and allegorical interpretations of Scripture, already familiar to him in his rabbinical training, could hardly fail to suggest themselves to him now as he dwelt on this absorbing theme. Among the rest, the twofold account of the creation in the first chapter of Genesis, which had supplied rabbinical theology with the idea of a first Adam who was earthly, and

[1] 1 Th. iii. 13. [2] 1 Th. iv. 16, 17.

a second, or ideal, Adam who was heavenly, created "in the image" and after the likeness of God himself, came naturally to his thought, and led him to see in Jesus of Nazareth this ideal and heavenly man, prefigured from the creation. In his resurrection, Jesus had proved himself possessed not only of a corruptible physical body, but also of an incorruptible spiritual body. "Sown a natural body," he had been "raised a spiritual body." And so the old Scripture had been fulfilled, and the long-awaited heavenly Messiah had appeared. And so it is written (referring to Gen. i. ii.); "The first man Adam was made a living soul (pure animal life), the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." "The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is from heaven." [1]

But having gone as far as this, Paul, however little of a mystic or idealist he may have been by nature, could hardly help going further, and asking himself at least where among the various ranks of invisible creatures by which, according to the belief of the day, the heavens were filled, this heavenly being, this Second Adam, was to be placed. As time passed on and Jesus did not appear, and Paul was called to spend many solitary hours in imprisonment, his mind seems to have turned more readily to metaphysical reveries and to have associated the thought of Jesus more and more closely with the current philosophical speculations of the hour. Hence the peculiar coloring to be found in his latest epistles, especially those to the Colos-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 44, 47. See Gfrörer's Gesch. d. Urchristenthums, ii. 235; Bunsen's Bibelwerk, viii. 374; Meyer on 1 Cor. xv. 45.

sians, Ephesians, and Philippians; a coloring so marked and distinct as to lead many recent commentators to deny their authenticity and ascribe to them a later Gnostic origin. Evidently (assuming the genuineness of these epistles), no words seemed to Paul too strong, none of the phraseology of the day too sublime, to describe the person or the place of this glorious being whose mission was not to any single people, but to universal humanity.[1] Christ is "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." He is the agent of God in creation: "By him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth;" "He is before all things, and by him all things consist." He shares in the very essence of Deity, though not himself Deity: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;" "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;"[2] "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every other name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."[3] So intimately, indeed, was he associated with God that, though tempted (as others angels had been) to make himself equal with God, he had yet refrained, and taken on himself instead the semblance of humanity: "Who being in the form of God (by nature divine) did not choose violently to grasp equality with God, but

[1] See Baur's Christenthum, i. 284–290. [2] Coloss. i. 15–17; ii. 9. [3] Phil. ii. 9–11.

made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."[1]

That this is a very exalted conception of Christ's nature no one can deny. To many minds it would seem equivalent to saying that Jesus was in some sense God. Paul himself, it is to be remembered, does not suggest this. In no passage of his epistles is Jesus called God;[2] nor, indeed, does Paul ever hesitate, in the midst of the most sublime phraseology, to call him man: "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead;" "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit;"[3] "If through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many;"[4] "He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained."[5] Whatever difficulty such a conception may cause to modern theologians, Paul found it quite easy, as we have seen, to speak of "the man from heaven."[6] But whatever Paul's own position in this matter, it is quite

[1] Phil. ii. 6, 7, — corrected translation.

[2] The only possible exception to this statement is Rom. ix. 5, where the common version, although contested by the best authorities, is certainly the most natural one; the strongest argument against it being that, if correct, this would be the *only* place where Paul applies the term God to Christ, or ascribes to him the doxology. The question is one of punctuation; the corrected reading being, "God over all be blessed forever." Titus ii. 13, however translated, is of a much later date.

[3] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 45. [4] Rom v. 15. [5] Acts xvii. 31. [6] 1 Cor. xv. 47. The best readings omit "the Lord" from this verse.

natural that when meditation on the subject once began, others would refuse to stop just there, and that this supernatural being, who had existed from the beginning, and in whom "all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt," should be in the end lifted quite beyond the realm of humanity.

When the Fourth Gospel was written, this step seems to have been already taken. The date of this Gospel is still uncertain; many critics, with no little reason on their side, placing it as late as the middle of the second century, before which time no positive proofs of its existence can be found. Taking the earliest date ever given, however,[1] and supposing John to have been its author, it must have been written nearly fifty years after Christ's death, thirty years later than Paul's earliest epistles,[2] and twenty years later than his last.[3] Time had been given, therefore, for much speculation upon the office and person of Christ; and whoever the writer may have been, he was evidently not averse to speculation, nor one to whom the religious thought of the day could be unknown.

What religious ideas were current among the more cultivated Jews at this period is now pretty well known, and can be understood by recalling the experience of the nation after the time of their exile. Upon the destruction of Jerusalem, while part of the Jewish people were carried captive to Babylon, another large portion took refuge in Egypt, which became from that time the home of a large Jewish colony. From each of these two sources a per-

[1] About A. D. 80. [2] A. D. 52 or 53. [3] A. D. 60 or 63.

ceptible influence was exerted upon the primitive Mosaic faith.

According to the religious philosophy of Zoroaster, which became familiar to the Jews in Babylon, Ormuzd, the God of Light, brought everything into being by his Word, which had existed before the world. He spoke, and all good things were created. All understanding, wisdom, virtue, are expressions of this Word. The Chaldaic paraphrases of the Old Testament show that this conception of the divine Word (Memra) had found its way into Jewish theology before the time of Christ.[1]

In Egypt, the Jews encountered a somewhat similar conception and similar phraseology in the Greek philosophy which had also found a home there, and which had taken the form of a modified Platonism.[2] The influence of this upon their religious ideas appears most plainly in the works of Philo, a prolific Jewish writer of Alexandria, born about twenty years before Christ. According to Philo, God is himself pure being, indefinable by words, incomprehensible to human thought, and dwelling in entire isolation from the universe. "The living God (τὸ ὄν), inasmuch as he is pure being, does not exist in relation to any thing, for he himself is full of himself, and is sufficient to himself."[3] To carry out the work

[1] See Targums of Onkelos, and of Palestine; Etheridge's Edition, I. Introduc. pp. 14–24; II. Glossary. Bretschneider's Glaubenslehre (1844), pp. 197, 299.

[2] For the opposite view of Zoroastrian and Platonic influences, see Nicolas' "Doctrines Religieuses des Juifs," P. II. ch. II.

[3] Philonis Opera, Ed. Richter, Lips. 1828: De Mutatione Nominum, § 4; De Somnis, i. 39.

of creation, a work not in itself befitting an infinitely pure Being, God made use of certain incorporeal powers called "ideas." Of these "ideas," which are sometimes described by Philo as divine attributes merely, sometimes as distinct personifications, he distinguishes some by name; among others, the kingly or royal power, as Lord, and the creative power by which the universe was made, as God.[1] Lest, however, these subordinate powers, though called Lord or God, should be confounded with the one Supreme Deity, he points out in another place the true method of distinguishing them: "The true God is one; but they who are called Gods are many. Wherefore the Holy Scripture indicates the true God by means of the article (ὁ θεός), but refers to those metaphorically called Gods without the article (θεός)."[2] Among these many divine agencies, was one special representative of Deity, not Deity itself but divine, which Philo, borrowing a term familiar to Greek philosophy from the time of Plato, calls the Logos or Word.[3] This Logos was the "idea of ideas,"[4] and was the instrument of creation, God himself being the cause. In all those passages of Old Testament history where God is represented as taking part in human affairs, it was really, according to Philo, the Logos acting in the place of Deity. It was the Logos who appeared to Hagar when cast out with Ishmael, who

[1] Philo, De Mutatione Nominum, § 4; De Somnis, i. 26.

[2] Philo, De Somnis, i. 39.

[3] For the Stoic conception of the λόγος as θεός, comp. Uberweg's Hist. of Philosophy, i. 195; also, Ritter's Hist. of Anc. Philosophy, iii. 528 n.

[4] Philo, De Opificio Mundi, § 6.

destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, who wrestled with Jacob all night long, who spoke to Moses from the burning bush, who came to Balaam, who led Israel through the wilderness. This Logos receives at Philo's hand many exalted epithets. It is the "image of God." "For even if we are not yet worthy to be called children of *God*, we may certainly be called children of his eternal *image*, the most holy Logos; for the most ancient Logos is the *image of God*."[1] It is the great High Priest (Ἀρχιερεύς); the Mediator between God and man. "The Logos is a perpetual suppliant in behalf of mortal man before the immortal one. And the Logos rejoices in its office and exalts it, saying, 'I stood in the midst between the Lord and you;'[2] being neither un-begotten as Deity, nor yet begotten like you, but between the two, a hostage to both."[3] It is the *first-born* of God (πρωτόγονος). "For there are, it appears, two temples of God; one of which is the world, in which, as high-priest, is his *first-born*, the divine Logos."[4] It is the *Helper* or *Comforter* (παράκλητος). "It was necessary that the high-priest (whose breastplate, according to Philo, allegorically represented the Logos) should employ as Helper, the Son, most perfect in virtue, to procure forgiveness of sins."[5] Finally, the Logos is God, a second god (δεύτερος θεός). Quoting the passage from Genesis, "In the image of God created he man," Philo says: "Very beautifully and wisely is

[1] Philo, De Confus. Ling. § 28.
[2] Num. xvi. 48.
[3] Philo, Quis Rer. Div. Her. § 42.
[4] Philo, De Somnis, i. § 37.
[5] Philo, De Vita Moys. iii. § 14.

this expression used ("in the image of God," instead of "in *his* image"), for nothing mortal could be made in the image of the most high God, the Father of all; it could only be made in the image of the second God, which is his Word."[1]

That this idea of an intermediate power between the Supreme Deity and his creation, an emanation from the hidden God, taking personal form, had found entrance into the Jewish mind long before the times of which we are now speaking, is plainly proved by passages both from their Canonical and from their Apocryphal writings. "I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence." "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was anointed from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was," &c.[2] "Wisdom hath been created before all things."[3] "I came out of the mouth of the Most High; I alone compassed the circuit of heaven, and walked in the bottom of the deep." "Come unto me, all ye that be desirous of me, and fill yourselves with my fruits." "They that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty."[4] "I called upon God and the Spirit of Wisdom came unto me." "In her is a spirit which is wise, holy, the *only begotten*." "She is a breath from the power of God." "She is a reflection of the everlasting Light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness."[5] "Thine

[1] Philo, Fragmenta, § 625.
[2] Prov. viii. 12, 22, 23.
[3] Ecclesiasticus, i. 4.
[4] Id. xxiv. 3, 5, 19, 21.
[5] Wis. of Solomon, vii. 7, 22, 25, 26.

almighty Word leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne." [1]

Still more evident is the influence of this thought upon the writer of the Fourth Gospel. To his mind it offered not the terms of speech alone, but the very order of religious ideas which best embodied his conception of the spirit and work of Christ. In this Gospel is no longer any suggestion of Jesus as the human Messiah. Human interests are almost lost from sight. Here is no family life or personal incident; no vicissitude of emotion or affection; no temptation or agony; here are no beatitudes, no parables, no moral precepts. We are walking among supernal beings, listening to exalted speech, watching a celestial life. This is not the Christ of the first three Gospels; it is something even less terrestrial than the glorified being of Paul's Epistles. It is "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It is the "only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." It is "the Word." "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." [2] To this "Word of God," so mystic in its nature and source, divine power is given. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." [3] "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment

[1] Wis. of Solomon, xviii. 15. [2] John i. 1–4; 14. [3] iii. 35, 36.

unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."[1] He is of celestial nature. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."[2] "I am the bread of life." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven."[3] "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world." "Before Abraham was, I am."[4] He stands in mysterious relations with the Father. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me." "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."[5] "I and my Father are one."[6]

Does this mean that the Son was God? The whole tone of the religious philosophy with which this Gospel is in such entire harmony makes the answer easy. Philo, as we have seen, with all the writers of his school, insists that there is but one God, who is absolute Being coming into no contact with the universe. From him issues the Logos to do the work of creation; and this Logos, though not the Infinite God himself, yet shared the divine nature. To express this they did not hesitate to use the term God, though always without the article. In no simpler way could they indicate identity of nature without identity of person. Taken in this sense, therefore, their language is unequivocal. Says the Neo-Platonic philosophy, "The Word is God" (θεός). Says

[1] John v. 22, 23.
[2] v. 26.
[3] vi. 48, 51.
[4] viii. 23, 58.
[5] xiv. 6, 9, 11.
[6] x. 30.

the Fourth Gospel also, "The Word was God" (*θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος*).[1]

Such then was the situation at the close of what may be called, somewhat indefinitely, the Apostolic age. Within the ranks of the Church, and, as soon as Scriptures exist, within the Christian Scriptures themselves, two distinct conceptions of the nature of Christ; the one making him a human and national Messiah, the other (treating Paul's view and John's as in this comparison virtually one), a heavenly being in intimate relations with the Father. That a corresponding difference of opinion should appear in the writings of the age which immediately followed, in other words that each of these Bible-views should have its followers, is only natural. Let me try to show this conflict of opinion, and the gradual growth of clearer conceptions, by brief quotations from the earlier Fathers of the Church.

First, Justin Martyr, a Greek convert to Christianity,[2] the first of the well-known Christian Fathers, gives us a full account[3] of a dialogue, real or supposed, between himself and one Trypho, a Jew, in which Justin seems to be combating the very Jewish idea of Christ of which I have already spoken. Trypho cannot understand how Jesus "submitted to be born and become man, and yet is not man [born] of men."[4] "How can you show that

[1] See Meyer's Handbuch über das Evangelium des Johannes, p. 40; Baur's Christenthum, 1. 298; Bretschneider, p. 299.

[2] Died A. D. 165.

[3] Written about 140.

[4] Jus. Martyr's Works, pp. 134, 148. The quotations from the Fathers, given in this lecture, are made from Clarke's Ante-Nicene Library.

beside the Maker of all things there is another God who submitted to be born of a virgin?"[1] Justin replies by confessing, "Some there are among ourselves who admit that Jesus is Christ, while holding him to be man of men."[2] He afterwards gives his own view: "God begat before all creatures, a certain rational power, proceeding from himself, called Glory of the Lord, Son, Wisdom, Angel, God, Lord, Logos."[3] "Moses declares that He who appeared unto Abraham under the oak at Mamre is God; sent with two angels by Another who remains ever in supercelestial places, invisible to all, holding personal intercourse with none, whom we believe to be Father and Maker of all things."[4] "God (or Angel, Lord, Christ) wrestled with Jacob."[5] "He who appeared to Abraham, and is called God, is distinct from Him who made all things; numerically I mean, not in will."[6] "He who has but the smallest intelligence will not venture to assert that the Maker and Father of all things, having left all supercelestial matters, was visible in a little portion of the earth."[7] "You must not imagine that the unbegotten God 'came down' and 'went up.'" Justin's argument in this case is very simple; if God came down to the earth to do certain things, there would have been no God in *heaven*, when those things happened.[8] Indeed, he goes so far as to say in reference to the "raining fire from heaven;" "One God was in heaven, another God on earth."[9] This God on earth was, of

[1] Jus. Martyr's Works, p. 151. [2] Trypho, xlviii. [3] p. 170. [4] p. 158. [5] p. 167. [6] p. 160. [7] p. 169. [8] p. 260. [9] p. 263.

course, the God who afterwards appeared in Christ.[1] In other words, the Christian mind at this time, taking Justin Martyr as its representative, had got so far as to consider Christ identical with the God who had personal intercourse with the Patriarchs and Prophets, but not with the Absolute Deity.

The danger of this direction of thought, however, is apparent. If there is a God on earth (Logos) and another in heaven (Jehovah), why then are there not two Gods? That this conclusion was actually drawn by many is shown, among other places, by a curious passage from Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch from 168 to 183, a Pagan by birth like Justin, and writing soon after him. He refers to the creation of Eve as proving that God is one, not many, and says: "God foreknew that men would call upon a number of gods; lest then it should be supposed that one God made man, another woman, therefore he made them both together, the woman with the man."[2]

About this time, too, and in the same interest, appeared the "Clementine Homilies," of which I have already spoken,[3] a species of religious romance in which the two disputants, Peter and Simon, stand unquestionably for Peter and Paul, the writer not quite venturing to attack Paul by name. Simon opens the discussion by insisting that the Jewish Scriptures distinctly teach that there are many gods; giving as proofs, "Let *us* make man in our image." "Behold, he is become as one of *us*."[4] "Thou shalt not

[1] Jus. Martyr's Works, p. 158. [2] Theophilus to Autolycus, ii. 28.
[3] Lecture i. [4] Gen. i. 26; iii. 22. [5] Ex. xxii. 28.

revile the gods."[1] "The Lord your God is God of gods."[2] Peter replies by saying with great frankness, "Each one finds in Scripture whatever opinion he wishes in regard to God;" but, "I accept no other God but Him who created me."[3] "One is He, who said to his Wisdom, 'Let us make man.'"[4] "Wisdom is united as soul to God."[5] "Our Lord did not proclaim himself to be God, but proclaimed him blessed who called him Son of God."[6] "What is begotten cannot be compared with the unbegotten or self-begotten."[7] "Men are of the same substance as God, but not gods." "What great matter then for Christ to be called God? for he has only what all have."[8] "Two things boundless cannot coexist."[9]

Irenæus,[9] who wrote at about the same period, declares that "Those who assert that Jesus was mere man, begotten by Joseph, are in a state of death."[10] Irenæus, however, like some other writers of this and the following generation, found his chief opponents, not among the Jewish party, but among the Gnostics; a sect, or succession of sects, which it is very difficult to characterize, and whose origin is uncertain, yet whose influence upon Christianity during the second and third centuries is very marked. Beginning independently of Christianity, and introducing its speculations into all the religions of the day, Gnosticism appropriated also the facts and truths of Christianity to itself, and came to its full development within the Christian

[1] Deut. x. 17. [2] Clem. Hom. p. 10. [3] p. 11. [4] p. 12.
[5] p. 15. [6] p. 16. [7] p. 16. [8] p. 17.
[9] Died about 202. [10] Irenæus ag. Heresies, iii. 19.

church.[1] Its fundamental principle being, apparently, the eternal antagonism of spirit and matter, and the complete separation therefore of God from the world, its immediate influence upon Christianity showed itself chiefly in a tendency to melt away the outward circumstances of Christ's life, and etherialize his word, until, according to the views of the Fathers, nothing specifically Christian remained. It also brought a new interpretation to bear upon the doctrine of the Logos, which threatened, unless resisted, to place God and Christ farther than ever apart. So at least many of the Fathers felt, as we judge from the bitter denunciations contained in the writings of this period against those who teach that there are two gods, not one; and it is to this that Irenæus refers in the following passage: "John teaches that there is but one God, who made all things by his Word; they allegorize that the Creator was one, the Father of the Lord another; the Son of the Creator one, but Christ from above another."[2] To put this Gnostic thought in plain terms: Jesus was the Son of the God who made the earth; but above that God was the Supreme God from whom came the Word, which entered into the visible Jesus and made him Christ.

Almost contemporary with Irenæus was the Carthaginian Tertullian,[3] who attacked, among other errors, the tendency of Gnosticism, hardly less dangerous than its Dualism, to elevate idea above reality, and entirely subordinate the outward form and historical incidents of Christianity to

[1] Baur's Chris. i. 161; Hase's Hist. of Chris. Church, p. 76.
[2] "Against Heresies," i. 287. [3] About A. D. 150 to 220.

the inward spiritual principle.[1] Hence the sect called the Docetæ; who held that there was no real Jesus, but only a seeming person, his body being, not flesh and blood, but a phantasm. Some theory of this kind was plainly current before the New Testament was finished: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God."[2] In Tertullian's time the chief representative of this sect seems to have been Marcion, whom Tertullian charges with saying: "Away with that plaguy taxing of Cæsar, and the scanty inn, and the squalid swaddling-clothes, and the hard stable. We do not care a jot for that multitude of the heavenly host who praised their God at night. Let the shepherds take better care of their flock, and let the wise men spare their legs so long a journey. Let Herod too mend his manners."[3] These jeers are silenced by proving, or declaring, that the "flesh of Christ is precisely as our flesh;" that "Christ is man's flesh with God's spirit."[4] In defence of this, Tertullian quotes Matthew, Romans, and Galatians,[5] and disposes of Marcion, in true theological style, by calling him "fouler than any Scythian." According to Tertullian, the greater number of believers still held Christ to be a man, on the ground that to call him God was to have two gods. "Common people," he says, "think of Christ as a man."[6] "The simple, who constitute the majority of the believers, are startled on the ground that their

[1] Comp. Baur's Christenthum, i. 213. [2] 1 John, iv. 2, 3.
[3] Tertullian, ii. 165. [4] p. 201. [5] p. 210. [6] i. 91.

rule of faith withdraws them from the world's plurality of gods to the one only true God."[1] "We worship God through Christ. Count Christ a man if you please."[2]

Tertullian is of chief interest to us, however, as being the first, apparently, to introduce the name or idea of a trinity into Christian theology.[3] Many Christian writers before Tertullian, as we have seen, had spoken of the Son as partaking of the divine nature, and being in a certain sense God, though always subordinate to the Supreme Being; many had spoken of the Holy Spirit; but of a threefold form of Deity, or of any trinity in the divine essence, they had been as silent as are the Scriptures themselves. It is curious, too, to see, even when the thought once suggested itself, how incidentally it arose, and how little impression it seemed to make upon the mind that originated it. No one could be less aware than Tertullian that the new word he was using was to be on men's lips for centuries as the central mystery of the Christian faith. In answer to one Praxeas, who declared that Christ being God, "it was God himself who was born of the Virgin," Tertullian was led to define his faith more closely: "We believe there is only one God; that this one only God has also a Son, His Word, who proceeded

[1] Tertullian, ii. 338. [2] i. 96.

[3] The idea was already familiar to both Oriental and Greek thought. See Neander's Dogmas, i. 131, 132, 173. The Greek term *τριάς*, according to Hagenbach (Hist. of Doctrines, i. 129), was first applied to Christian theology by Theophilus of Antioch (A. D. 170 or 180), whose trias consisted of *θεός, λόγος, σοφία*. (Theoph. to Autol. ii. 15.)

from himself, and by whom all things were made. Him to have been sent by the Father into the Virgin, and to have been born of her, being both man and God, and to have been called by name Jesus Christ. He sent also from heaven the Holy Ghost, sanctifier of those who believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost."[1] Soon after he adds, to show that the unity of the divine nature is not disturbed, "All these are of One, by unity of substance, while the mystery is still guarded which distributes the unity into a trinity, placing in their order the three, — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."[2] How far this apparently accidental thought was from taking the full shape of later times, is shown by various passages which follow: "My assertion is, that the Father is one, and the Son one, and the Spirit one, and that they are distinct from each other; yet not by way of diversity, but by distribution;" "The Father is entire Substance, the Son derived and subordinate;"[3] "The Father is not Son, as day is not night;" "In order to be a husband, I must have a wife; can never myself be my own wife."[4] "I and my Father are one," according to Tertullian, means, not one person, but "one thing."[5] As analogies of the trinity of which he speaks, he gives root, tree, and fruit; fountain, stream, branch; sun, ray, and apex.[6]

About A. D. 200, then, the conception of a trinity found its way into Christian speculation.

So far was this, however, from satisfying the Christian

[1] Adv. Praxeas, ii. 336. [2] p. 337. [3] p. 349.
[4] p. 351. [5] p. 383. [6] p. 348.

mind at once, or making any immediate impression upon religious controversy, that less than fifty years after Tertullian wrote, a fourfold conception of the divine nature appeared in place of the threefold. For some time it remained doubtful whether the great mystery would find its solution in a trinity or a quaternity. According to Sabellius, probably a presbyter in the church about A. D. 250, and writing with the same authority as Tertullian, behind the trias (or trinity), Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the Monas (or Word) itself, of which the trias is only an expression. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are successive phases of the Supreme Deity. Christ was only a transient form of the manifestation of the Logos; "went forth as a ray and was withdrawn." In the end, the trias is to resolve itself back into the Monas. The trinity is transient; the unity permanent.[1]

Almost contemporary with Sabellius was Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch from 260 to 269, who is interesting to us, as making prominent once more the human personality of Christ, which seemed in so much danger of being wholly forgotten. According to Paul, Christ was a man, and was exalted to peculiar union with the divine nature by the illumination of divine Wisdom. "Wisdom dwelt in Christ as in no other." "The Logos came down to impart itself to Christ, then rose again to the Father." "Christ was not God by nature, but became so by pro-

[1] Neander, i. 594–601; Baur, i. 312–315. Theophilus of Antioch also adds immediately to his trias a fourth member, man; thus presenting the divine essence as God, Word, Wisdom, Man. (Theoph. to Autol. ii. 15.)

gressive development." [1] Paul was deposed in 269, and his name was afterwards the synonym for heresy in the church. Eusebius, writing in the next century, says of him, "He entertained low and degrading views of Christ, and taught that he was in nature but a common man." [2]

A second champion of the Trinity appeared in Origen, greatest of the Fathers, yet one whom Orthodoxy is very wary in claiming.[3] Origen seemed to come upon the idea of a trinity as accidentally as Tertullian, and dwelt quite as little upon it, declaring indeed that the position of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Father and Son "needs to be inquired into." [4] The thought seems to have struck him first in connection with the baptismal formula, of which he says, "Indeed, the person of the Holy Spirit was of such dignity that baptism was not complete but by authority of the most excellent trinity of them all." [5] Origen's view differed from preceding theories in this. The Son, as he conceived, though distinct from the Father and subordinate to him, yet shares his absolute being in having been evolved out of the Father, not at any special time, but *eternally*. God, whether as Creator or as Father, must be what he is eternally. The eternal necessity of the Father creates the eternal Son.[6]

Without quoting from Origen further, I cannot take leave of him without calling attention to one delightful trait which characterizes him almost alone among eccle-

[1] Neander, i. 601–605.
[2] Euseb. Ecc. Hist. p. 286.
[3] Died about 254.
[4] Origen's Works, i. 2.
[5] Origen's Works, i. 34.
[6] Comp. Baur's Christenthum, i. 340.

siastical writers. On whatever point he is speaking, the moment he has told us all that Church or Scripture has to say, he adds with the utmost simplicity: "Beyond this the church doctrine is not settled," or "On these matters there is not sufficient clearness in the teachings of the church," or "Here the Scriptures give no light."[1] Nor can I refrain from quoting, as I close, this one characteristic and noble passage: "God is incomprehensible. Whatever be the knowledge we are able to obtain of him, either by perception or by reflection, we must of necessity believe that he is by many degrees better than what we perceive him to be."[2]

I stop here abruptly; not because the position or doctrine of Origen constitutes a turning-point in Christian history, but because almost immediately after Origen's death, and partly in consequence of his teachings, the great contest arose which ended in the first formal and authoritative enunciation of Christian doctrine. Meantime, I trust that in this somewhat hasty survey of the first three centuries, the following points have been made clear: —

First. That the doctrine of the Christian church concerning Christ was not less than three centuries in forming.

Second. That during this period the range of beliefs and ideas concerning him was as wide as now, with this difference; that then these beliefs were all equally orthodox, and one as likely as the other to prevail.

[1] Origen's Works, i. 3–7. [2] i. 11.

Third. That the origin of the controversy is to be found, to go no further back, in the two different views of Christ's nature which appeared in the New Testament itself, and divided the church at the beginning.

Fourth. That in drawing its converts so much more largely from the Gentile than from the Jewish world, Christianity received inevitably the impress of Gentile thought, and that its later growth was, in great measure, determined by this fact.

Finally. That in the middle of the third century, two hundred years after the death of Christ, it was still doubtful, and only to be settled by an imperial council, whether the Christian church should regard its founder as a man among men, or as the Lord from heaven.

January 4, 1874.

III.

ARIANISM AND THE COUNCIL OF NICÆA.

THE last lecture, although bringing down the controversy concerning Christ's nature beyond the middle of the third century, left the great question still undecided. The Christian world, more and more forgetful of its Jewish antecedents, impregnated with Greek thought, and growing familiar with the current ideas and terms of religious philosophy, had learned to call Christ God, but had as yet gone no further. The term God in those days being constantly used to mean simply a divine being, the question still remained in what sense Christ was God, and, if God, in what relation he stood to the Supreme Deity. So far as this question was concerned, the two centuries had been spent, as we have seen, in showing how Christ was God, without on the one hand making his humanity a shadow, or, on the other hand, making two gods. How serious both these dangers were then considered, the quotations already given have amply proved. We are now to see how the controversy reached its first solution; and how, out of such conflicting ideas, the first specific doctrine was enunciated concerning the relation of Christ to God.

It was quite in character that the agitation which was so profoundly to affect the Christian church should begin in Alexandria, the source of so much of the philosophical and religious speculation which acted upon early Christianity. As in still remoter ages Egyptian faith profoundly modified and re-created Judaism, so in these later days, the Greek faith, which had planted itself in Egypt, was to profoundly modify, and almost re-create, Christianity. This happened as follows:—

In Alexandria, in the year 318, a heated theological controversy arose between the Bishop Alexander and one of his presbyters named Arius, whom he charged, in a public gathering of his clergy, with holding false doctrines concerning Christ. Arius retorted by accusing the bishop of Sabellianism, and defending his own views as more logical and orthodox. The excitement arising from this dispute became so intense, and the rebellious priest found so many supporters in Egypt, Libya, and Palestine, that in 321 Alexander summoned a Synod of Egyptian and Libyan bishops, by whom Arius was formally deposed and excommunicated. Says Alexander, in writing to the Bishop of Constantinople: "Arius and Achillas have formed a conspiracy; they deny the divinity of Christ, and declare him on a level with other men, asserting that we also are able to become, like him, the Son of God."[1] And again, in a circular letter to the churches, Alexander says: "In our diocese, certain lawless and antichristian men have arisen teaching apostasy; forerunners

[1] Theodoret's Eccl. History, p. 17.

of antichrist." "This is the execrable character of their heresy," &c.[1]

After this somewhat formidable introduction of the great heretic, we are a little surprised, on turning to Arius himself, to find how innocent both the man and his doctrines seem. Arius, if we may judge from this distance, was not even an agitator; and, so far from wishing to change the belief of the Christian church, he was employed, as he thought, in guarding the church from the entrance of error. He was a parish priest of ascetic habits and intellectual tastes, who, amid the conflicting and unsettled theological opinions of the day, had adopted those doctrines which seemed to him the most faithful interpretation of Scripture truth, and which, of course, in the absence of any authoritative dogmas, had the same title to respect as those of his opponents. So little did he consider himself broaching any new or revolutionary theory that, on the contrary, he charged his bishop, as we have seen, with sharing the errors of Sabellius; and addressed a sympathizing bishop, to whom he wrote an account of his troubles, as "most faithful and orthodox Eusebius." In the same letter, too, he said of certain opponents with conscious or unconscious humor: "These have embraced heretical opinions. One says the Son is an effusion, another that he is an emission, the other that he is unbegotten. These are impieties to which we could not listen though the heretics should threaten us with a thousand deaths." [2]

[1] Socrates's Eccl. History, p. 8. [2] Theodoret, p. 27.

Nor to our modern thought would there seem to be anything very dangerous in his doctrines themselves, so far as we can judge them from the fragmentary remains of his writings which the Church has chosen to preserve. Like many of his predecessors, whom the Church has judged less harshly, Arius saw the great danger of making Christ so absolutely equal with God that there would be two gods; a tendency against which he struggled as persistently as had either Tertullian, or Irenæus, or Origen before him. His exact feeling in this matter shows itself, and the religious tendency which he was opposing appears, in such passages as these: "We must either suppose two divine original essences, without beginning and independent of each other, a Dyarchy, or we must not shrink from asserting that the Logos had a beginning of his existence; that there was a moment when he did not, as yet, exist."[1] "We are persecuted," he says in his letter to Eusebius, "because we say that the Son had a beginning, but that God was without beginning; and that the Son was created out of nothing."[2] "We say and believe that the Son is not unbegotten, but that he has subsisted before all time, and before ages, as perfect God, only-begotten and unchangeable, and that he existed not before he was begotten."[3] "The bishop has driven us out of the city as Atheists, because we do not concur in what he preaches, namely, that the Son is unbegotten as the Father; that he is always being begotten, without having been begotten."[4]

[1] Quoted by Neander, Hist. ii. 361.
[2] Theod. p. 30
[3] Id.
[4] Id.

To put the Arian heresy, with the process of reasoning which led to it, into the fewest words, it seems to have been this: God is unbegotten. He is God *because* he is unbegotten. Whoever is born out of another shares all his qualities. If Christ then were born (begotten) of God in literal sense, he would share, among other divine qualities, the quality of unbegottenness; would be himself unbegotten. Then we should have two Unbegottens; two Absolutes; which is impossible. Consequently Christ was not begotten, but was *created;* created before all time indeed, yet not before eternity; created not out of the Father's being, but out of the only other thing possible; out of nothing.[1]

So subtle and purely abstract were the doctrines which convulsed Christendom when doctrines were forming, fifteen hundred years ago. So easily could one still speak of Christ as God without being supposed to mean Deity. Nothing would seem more unlikely to divide the Christian church than this metaphysical dispute whether the Logos was "created" or was "eternally born." What might have resulted from the controversy under ordinary circumstances, we cannot tell. Possibly it would have died of itself within that generation, like the hundred equally important disputes which had preceded it, and would have been remembered in history simply as the quarrel of two angry priests, but for an entirely new element that entered, just at this juncture, into theological polemics. This was the political element; or, more exactly, the imperial. For

[1] Comp. Baur, i. 344.

the first time in the history of Christianity, there was a Christian emperor; and, as it happened, an emperor as ambitious to distinguish himself in the religious as he was in the civil affairs of his realm.

Constantine, who succeeded to the western throne in 306, and became sole emperor in 323, on coming to Constantinople to make his capital there, and give the city its name, found the Eastern church already divided by the Arian strife, and the Christian religion, which he had lately adopted with so much pomp, the subject of popular ridicule in the theatres.[1] Taking the matter in hand at once, as an affair which it needed but a word from an emperor to settle, he wrote to the two combatants an imperial letter, telling them that the matter in dispute was "of small or scarcely least importance," that "there was no unvarying standard of judgment in us," that the Scripture passages in question were "inexplicable" at best, and that there was nothing "to prevent their communion with each other."[2] Wise words, which would have spoken well for his judgment and insight had he not so soon forgotten them.

As the quarrel continued to rage in spite of his appeal, the emperor determined to summon together all the bishops of the church to determine the theological questions involved. Hence, in 325, the Council of Nicæa, not the first Christian council, as local gatherings had already been held in different dioceses, but the first universal or Œcumenical Council; as, indeed, it was the first moment

[1] Socrat. p. 11. [2] p. 15.

in the history of the church when any authority had existed competent to convene a general council. The church, for the first time, had a head; and for the first time since Paul and Barnabas were summoned from Antioch to Jerusalem, it met to determine its theological beliefs.

Indeed, Constantine seems to have been, in very fact, the head of the Nicæan Council; was quite conscious of the dignity of his position, and conducted affairs in imperial style throughout. He summoned the bishops, he appointed the place, he assigned a hall in his own palace for their gathering, he entertained them during their whole stay, he seated the more conspicuous prelates at his own table, he entered the council-chamber in the full splendor of purple robe and imperial diadem, dazzling the unaccustomed eyes of provincial bishops,[1] he took constant and active part in the proceedings,[2] he argued the profoundest theological points with the most learned bishops, so explaining away the difficulties of the Nicæan creed, as Eusebius of Cæsarea himself assures us, that he for one was willing to sign it,[3] he produced in the end a degree of unanimity among the three hundred members of the council, which it is safe to say never existed among an equal number of excited theologians before or since. Indeed, not even after the council had ended, could the emperor quench his new-born theologic zeal, or surrender the novel delight of debating such lofty themes. No sooner had the bishops scattered to their homes than a series of imperial letters followed them. He wrote to the

[1] Stanley's East. Church, p. 213. [2] p. 219. [3] Theod. p. 45.

Bishop of Alexandria, denouncing as "blasphemies against the Savior"[1] the identical doctrines which before the council he had declared "of small or scarcely least importance;" he wrote a second letter, ordering Arius's books to be burned, and those who read them to be put to death; he wrote a third letter fixing the doctrine concerning Easter; he wrote a fourth letter concerning church-buildings which he feared would fall into neglect; he wrote a fifth letter expressing his anxiety about Christ's sepulchre; he wrote, as Socrates tells us, "other letters of a more oratorical character against Arius, exposing him and his doctrines to ridicule."[2]

To return to the council itself; the descriptions show it to have been a singular gathering, including all possible shades of culture, training, and belief. Some features were evidently peculiar to the times, some remind us at once of the theological gatherings of to-day. Here is a description which has a singularly familiar sound: "A man was there of unsophisticated understanding, who reproved the disputants, saying, 'Christ did not teach us the dialectic art, nor vain subtleties, but simple-mindedness.'"[3] One Ascesius there was also, a Novatian, as tenacious of the doctrines of his sect as any Puritan of the eighteenth century, to whom Constantine, after trying in vain to soften his rigor, finally said, "Ho, ho! Ascesius; plant a ladder and climb up into heaven by yourself;"[4] an incident which gives Gibbon a chance to remark, "Most of the Christian sects have, by turns, borrowed the

[1] Soc. p. 30. [2] pp. 30–38. [3] p. 18. [4] Stanley, p. 270.

ladder of Ascesius."[1] Nor would the description of the council be complete without the mention of Athanasius, the young deacon of the Alexandrian church, who, notwithstanding his subordinate position, was yet from the first the recognized leader of the anti-Arian movement. He had already been the prominent opponent of Arius at Alexandria, and took now a prominent part in framing the creed, while his great theological ability, together with his unyielding hostility to Arianism when afterwards Bishop of Alexandria, has associated his name with the whole controversy as closely as that of Arius himself.

Of the discussions of the council, and the arguments by which the result was reached, no account remains; notwithstanding the fact that one of the prominent actors in the debate, Eusebius of Cæsarea, was the author of an ecclesiastical history, which he must have finished after these events, but which he brings to a close the very year before the council was held. Apparently there was not much in the proceedings which an ecclesiastical historian cared to record. The character of the debates of these theologians is indicated in a measure by the following passages from Theodoret, who wrote his history before the close of the same century: —

"Arius and his friends drew up a creed which was torn in pieces."[2]

"The formulary of Eusebius was brought forth, which contained undisguised evidences of his blasphemy. The impious writing was torn up."[3]

[1] Dec. and Fall, iii. 3, n. [2] Theodoret, iii. p. 32. [3] p. 33.

The only question with these disputants seemed to be, which creed should remain untorn.

This creed of Eusebius, as we learn from his own account, was an inoffensive document, drawn up almost entirely in Scripture phraseology, and brought forward as a compromise measure; asserting positively the divinity of Christ, yet avoiding such expressions as were needlessly offensive to the Arians.[1] At first, owing to the high honor in which Eusebius was held, as well as the warm support of the emperor, it seemed likely to succeed. No one objected to it; but unfortunately it was so eagerly accepted by the Arians that their opponents grew suspicious, and concluded, as we have seen, that the document was "impious."

At last a creed was framed that was not torn. It originated in this singular way. During the debate over the formulary of Eusebius, a letter from one of the foremost Arians had been produced, containing this expression: "To say that the Son is of *one substance* with the Father is evidently absurd."[2] The letter of course was torn in pieces on the spot; but the objectionable phrase was remembered. "Any expression," argued the opponents of Arius, "which is especially offensive to the Arians, is on that very account the word to be embodied in our creed. If to them the phrase 'of one substance' is hateful, it is the very phrase we want. It will be sure to expel them from the church."

Such, at least, was the principle upon which the majority

[1] Nean. ii. 373. [2] Stanley, p. 228.

immediately acted. The phrase in question did not cover the actual point of the controversy, or solve the questions so long at issue; it had not been thought of in advance; it expressed the full belief of no single party of the council; it was not even a Scripture phrase, nor had it the sanction of any of the Fathers of the church, but, on the contrary, had been pronounced heretical within half a century; but it was one of the few doctrines on which the majority could unite, it was a term into which both the Sabellian and the tritheistic party could put what meaning they chose, and above all, it had been condemned by the Arians in advance, and therefore it was accepted.[1] The term "of one substance" (homoousios) was incorporated into the Nicæan creed and became its one characteristic symbol.

This being accomplished, the important work of the council was ended. The emperor's assent was easily obtained; the opponents of Arius, of course, gave their signatures readily; while of the friends of Arius, only five refused their names, and of these five, three were finally persuaded to sign. This discreditable fact speaks for itself, and warns us, if we would search for moral courage and fidelity to conviction, not to go back to the Christian bishops of the fourth century. When out of more than three hundred theologians representing all shades and antagonisms of religious belief, all but two give their signatures to a creed which when first proposed was met by a storm of angry dissent, we hardly need the explanation

[1] Gibbon, iii. 21; Stanley, p. 228.

given in the naïve confession of Eusebius: "The Emperor succeeded in bringing them into similarity of judgment and conformity of opinion on all controverted points."[1]

The Nicæan Creed, as adopted by the council, is as follows: —

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things both visible and invisible:

"And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten that is to say, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things in earth — who for us men and for our salvation, came down and was made flesh, and was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day; went up into the heavens, and is come again to judge the quick and dead.

"And in the Holy Ghost.

"But those that say, 'there was when He was not,' and 'before He was begotten He was not,' and that 'He came into existence from what was not,' or who profess that the Son of God is of a different person or substance, or that he is created or changeable, or variable, are anathematized by the Catholic Church."[2]

It is idle, of course, to look to this creed for any ultimate word concerning the nature of Christ. It was not the last creed of Christendom, it was the first of many; a creed which started more questions than it answered; a creed which did not even answer the one question sub-

[1] Soc. p. 20. [2] Stanley, p. 233.

mitted to it. How purely accidental was the form which the Nicæan confession finally took could hardly be better shown than by this single fact. The word homoousios, which constitutes the distinctive feature of this creed, is the very term which half a century before,[1] at a synod held at Antioch to deal with Paul of Samosata, a heretic of another stamp, was formally condemned as unorthodox.[2] If we wait thirty years longer,[3] we shall find the same word rejected by another council, on the following singularly rational grounds: "The term homoousios shall not be used, because it is not found in the Holy Scripture, and because it transcends human knowledge, as none but the Father can know how the Son was begotten." [4]

Indeed, so far from effecting conformity or harmony in the Christian church, the adoption of the Nicæan creed was the occasion of more bitter and long-continued strife than Christendom had ever known. The humorous side of the theological condition which followed is well shown in this oft-quoted passage from Gregory of Nyssa, describing what he saw in Constantinople: "Every corner and nook of the city is full of men who discuss incomprehensible subjects; the streets, the markets, the people who sell old clothes, those who sit at the tables of the money-changers, those who deal in provisions. Ask a man how many oboli it comes to, he gives you a dogmatic discourse on generated and unregenerated being. Inquire the price of bread, you are answered, 'The

[1] A. D. 269.
[2] Baur, i. 337; Gibbon, iii. 21.
[3] A. D. 357.
[4] Baur, ii. 86.

Father is greater than the Son, and the Son subordinate to the Father.' Ask if your bath is ready, you are answered, 'The Son of God was created from nothing.'"[1]

But the matter had a far more serious side. The condemned doctrines showed themselves too strong to be suppressed by a single council; and the events of the following half-century were a constant satire upon the assertion of Athanasius, "The Word of the Lord which was given in the Œcumenical Council of Nicæa remaineth forever."[2] That the doctrines of that council represented, on the whole, the dominant sentiment of the Christian church, it would be foolish to deny; for Arianism in the end succumbed, and the Nicæan confession survived. But the triumph of that confession *at Nicæa* had slight significance, and was by no means accepted at the time as final. It was an imperial rather than a religious victory; and the same imperial influence gave to Arianism afterwards a long period of triumph. The decree of the Second Council of Sirmium in 357, from which I have already quoted,[3] shows the extent to which this reaction went. "Let every one," says that decree, "hold this as Catholic doctrine, that Father and Son are two persons, and that the Son is subordinate to the Father."[4] The fifty years immediately following the Council of Nicæa are dotted with synods; Arian to-day, Athanasian to-morrow; each claiming final authority, each repudiating or modifying the work of its predecessor. The historian Socrates

[1] Nean. ii. 388, n.
[2] Stanley, p. 242.
[3] p. 60.
[4] Baur, ii. 86.

enumerates eight of these, with eight distinct creeds, between the years 325 and 329. The victory was not certain, as we shall see, until the year 381, when a second General Council was called at Constantinople, under the auspices of the Emperor Theodosius, to revise the creed of Nicæa, and declare all opposition to it heresy. According to this later form of the Nicæan confession, the Holy Ghost is pronounced the "Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified."

Athanasius triumphed in the end; nor would I represent his triumph as necessarily a misfortune to the Church. As between the two men themselves, there is little for us in these days, as we have seen, to choose. Both speak a theological language foreign to our ears; both deal in subtleties whose importance and interest have long ago been lost. But so far as concerns the word itself, which divided them, and the deeper import which that word may be made to bear, the religious world has little reason to regret the triumph of Athanasius, if, indeed, these controversies have any real importance. If Arius was right, then is not only the Son, but all humanity as well, essentially distinct from the Father. The universe is twofold, not a unit; the human and the divine have no real unity. If Athanasius was right, then not only the Son, but all humanity as well, is of one essence and spirit with the Father. Then the universe is one throughout, with God as its centre and its whole; and the

vision of an absolute and all-embracing unity, embracing God and man, heaven and earth, time and eternity, which has haunted thoughtful minds in every age, is no illusion, but a fine reality.[1]

One point more and the exact significance of this first Christian creed will be understood. You have already noticed, probably, that the Nicæan formula contains no mention of a trinity. If you have inferred that because the Holy Spirit was mentioned at the close, therefore a trinity was virtually there, and was intended to be understood though not mentioned, a few words will be necessary to put the matter in its true light. The trinity is not in the Nicæan creed, either in name or reality. It is no more in the Nicæan creed than in the Arian creed.

You will remember that in my last lecture, while quoting from Tertullian and Origen, writers of the second and third centuries, passages which alluded to a trinity, I spoke of these allusions as so incidental in their character as to prove that the doctrine, far from being universally accepted, was new and unfamiliar. Even with these Fathers, it was less a doctrine than a passing idea. Of the "Sacred Trinity," the "Most Holy Trinity," or of any Trinity which would require a capital letter in writing it, I remember no mention; still less of any tri-personality. And now, as if to prove that the thought was transient and unformed, three-quarters of a century after the death of Origen, a universal council of the Christian church met

[1] Compare Baur, ii. 97.

to establish the creed of Christendom, and no mention of a trinity was made. Neither in the discussions of the council, nor in the fierce controversies which sprung from it, did either party seem to have the subject of a trinity on its mind.

Exactly what the Nicean creed did was this: It pronounced the Father and Son of one substance, or coequal; of the Holy Ghost it simply said, "We believe in the Holy Ghost." That this was no accidental omission, but that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit was at this time really undetermined, the writings of the period clearly show. At the Synod of Antioch, in 341, a letter of the Bishops constituting the synod speaks of Christ in these terms: "The Son, God the only-begotten, God of God, Whole of Whole, Only of Only, Perfect of Perfect, King of King, Lord of Lord, Living Word, Wisdom, Life, True Light, Way of Truth, Resurrection, Shepherd, Gate, Unalterable image of the Divine substance, Power, Counsel, Glory of the Father;" while the Holy Spirit is dismissed with a single word. Gregory of Nazianzen, writing about 380, says: "Some of our theologians consider the Holy Spirit to be a certain mode of the Divine agency, others a creature of God, others God himself. Others say they do not know which of the two opinions they ought to adopt, out of reverence for the Holy Scriptures, which have not clearly explained this point." Hilary of Poictiers, who spent his life in the midst of the Arian controversy, as one of the supporters of Athanasius, "held it best to remain fast by simple Scripture doctrine concerning the Holy

Spirit, which, as it seemed to him, furnished no materials for exact logical definition of this doctrine." [1]

Nothing in all history is more obvious than the gradual evolution of the ecclesiastical doctrine of the Trinity. As the Christian world was exactly three hundred and twenty-five years in determining that the Father and Son are co-equal and co-substantial, so it was precisely fifty-five years longer in determining that the Holy Spirit is a third factor equal to both the others. In the edict of the Emperor Theodosius, issued on his own authority, in 380, and confirmed by the general council of Constantinople in 381, are for the first time these words: "According to the discipline of the Apostles, and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe the Sole Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, under an equal majesty and a pious Trinity. We authorize the followers of this doctrine to assume the title of Catholic Christians, and as we judge that all others are extravagant madmen, we brand them with the impious name of Heretics." [2]

Finally, in what was long considered, and what is still called, the Creed of Athanasius, written, however, by some unknown hand a full century after Athanasius's death,[3] the Trinity received its complete doctrinal statement, and was given in such fulness of detail as to leave no possibility of further misunderstanding. "The Catholic faith is, that we adore One God in Trinity, and Trinity in

[1] Neander's Hist. of Church, ii. 419.

[2] Chris. Ex., March, 1860, p. 250, article by Dr. F. H. Hedge.

[3] Stanley, p. 347.

Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. . . . The Father is one person, the Son is one person, the Holy Ghost is one person, yet the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God. . . . The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, the Holy Ghost is uncreated; the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God; yet are there not three gods but One God. . . . Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly."

It is to be remembered, however, that this creed had no connection either with Athanasius or with Nicæa, but came more than a century later. Before that century was past, or the definitions of the Athanasian creed were possible, a preliminary question arose, which brought fresh strife into the church, and could only be answered by a new series of councils.

January 18, 1874.

IV.

CONTROVERSY CONCERNING THE TWO NATURES.

AT the beginning of the fifth century, the doctrine of the Christian church, so far at least as the nature of its founder was concerned, was to all appearance finally determined. At one General Council in 325, the Son had been pronounced coequal, even in substance, with the Father, at the Second General Council in 381, the Holy Spirit had been pronounced coequal with Father and Son; and thus the idea of a Trinity, vaguely present in the second century to the minds of a Tertullian and an Origen, had taken at last complete dogmatic form. What further controversy was possible? "None," would have been the answer, no doubt, of the actors in each council. In determining the special doctrine which pressed for instant solution, and condemning the special heresy which threatened the unity of the hour, they seemed to themselves, unquestionably, to be uttering the final decision of the Church. How Athanasius himself regarded the decree of Nicæa appears from the words which I quoted in my last lecture: "The Word of the

Lord which was given in the Œcumenical Council of Nicæa remaineth forever." As a matter of fact, however, each of those early doctrinal decisions simply brought new differences to light, and rendered further and more exact decisions necessary. To put New Testament religion into doctrinal form proved no easy task. The First Council necessitated the Second; the Second, as we shall see, called for a Third and a Fourth.

The question left unanswered by the first two councils is plain at once. The Son is equal to the Father, said the Synod of Nicæa; not subordinate, as Origen and the early Fathers, following John and Paul, had said; not of another substance, as Arius claimed; but in all respects God. But what becomes then of the *human nature* of Christ? He seemed in all respects like a man. He had a human body and mind, human mother, brothers, and sisters, was born, lived and died, grew out of infancy and childhood into manhood, increased in wisdom, and was subject to emotion, affection, and suffering. Was all this, as the earlier heretics had declared, only apparent, not real? Or, if real, how is this humanity in Christ connected with his Deity? In a word, while the dogma of the two councils had determined, however incomprehensibly, the relation of Christ to God, it had left undetermined the relation of the two natures in Christ himself. In making the Son and Father one, it seemed to be making the Son two.

Such was the question still to be answered; and such the source of the fierce disputes which divided the

church during the first half of the fifth century. Extending, virtually, from the Council of Constantinople in 381, to the Council of Chalcedon in 451, and bearing at different periods of its progress the several names of Nestorian, Eutychian, and Monophysite, it was, in reality, one long contest to determine the relation between the divine and human natures in Christ. To use the later phraseology of the church, the doctrine of the Trinity must be supplemented by the doctrine of the Incarnation; and the construction of this latter doctrine was the problem of the fifth century. If the problem seems to us now to have been solved by peculiar methods, and the strife settled by questionable weapons, if the cries of infuriated monks, the yells of hostile parties, or the arms of imperial soldiery, seem hardly the arguments for determining the subtler relations or the profounder mysteries of the Divine Being, we can only accept this as a necessary condition of formulating religious doctrines in a half-barbarous age.

The controversy began in Constantinople about the year 428, taking at first what seems to us a singularly trivial form. When the exact definition of eternal mysteries is once entered upon, however, the most puerile questions must be answered. If Christ was God, said those who were jealous of his Deity, then it was God who was born in Bethlehem of Judæa, of the Virgin Mary. Then Mary was not simply the mother of Jesus, she was in literal fact the "Mother of God."

Whether this phrase, when first spoken, had the same

grossly anthropomorphic sound which it bears to our ears, we cannot tell. Apparently, it was employed for a long time without exciting any attention; and certainly at the beginning of the fifth century the phrase was in familiar use, being especially in vogue in the Alexandrian Church, where the Athanasian spirit still prevailed, and where for a long time the allegorizing and transcendental school of Christian thought found its home. In Antioch, on the contrary, the old abode of Arianism, where a more critical and rationalistic spirit seems to have gained entrance, and a scientific method of Scripture interpretation to have won the day against the allegorical, the phrase gave great offence, and was regarded as a virtual denial of Christ's humanity.[1]

A verbal controversy over this question had already begun among the Eastern churches, when in 428, Nestorius, a presbyter of Antioch, and in full sympathy with the tendencies of that school, was made Patriarch of Constantinople. Almost immediately after his entrance upon the office, one of his presbyters, alarmed at the spreading heresy, and assured beforehand, perhaps, of his Patriarch's sympathy, took occasion to say in public discourse, "Let no one style Mary 'Mother of God;' for Mary was human, and it is impossible for God to be born of a human being."[2] The excitement caused by this seems to have been intense, and the part taken in it by the new Patriarch is best shown by the language of one of the two

[1] Baur, ii. 108; Neander's Hist. of Chris. Dogmas, i. 325.

[2] Evagrius's Eccles. Hist., Bohn's Edit. p. 258.

earliest historians of these events, Evagrius.[1] "Then Nestorius, that God-assaulting tongue, that second conclave of Caiaphas, that work-shop of blasphemy, in whose case Christ is again made the subject of bargain and sale, by having his natures divided and torn asunder, . . . vomited forth the venom of his soul, avouching, 'I could never be induced to call that God which admitted of being two months old or three months old.'"[2]

Reducing this excited rhetoric to simple fact, Nestorius seems to have met the emergency with singular moderation and dignity, expounding in several discourses, the true nature of Christ, by no means denying his divinity, but distinguishing between the Logos and the man Jesus,[3] and declaring, in terms hardly distinguishable from those in which the Orthodox doctrine was itself finally framed, that in Christ were two natures, both Deity and Humanity, united together in closest intimacy. As the best escape from the difficulty, he proposed that Mary should be called neither Mother of God nor Mother of man, but "Mother of Christ."[4]

To quiet the agitation and close the controversy, the Emperor Theodosius followed the example of the first Theodosius, and of Constantine, by summoning a general council, which met at Ephesus in 431, and was styled the Third Œcumenical Council. The council was not directed, as before, by the Emperor in person; yet, although left entirely to the ecclesiastics, it bore hardly more the

[1] Writing about 570.
[2] Evag. pp. 257, 258.
[3] Socrates, p. 371.
[4] Nean. Hist. ii. 452.

character of a thoughtful assembly, deliberating upon religious themes, than did that at Constantinople or at Nicæa. The opponent of Nestorius, and leader of the opposite party, was the notorious Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, that zealous defender of a spiritual Christianity whom the church has placed among its saints, but who, before the council of Ephesus, had chiefly signalized himself by levelling all the Jewish synagogues in Alexandria with the ground, and by causing the beautiful Pagan maiden, and gifted teacher of Greek philosophy, Hypatia, to be torn from her chariot and brutally murdered in the streets of Alexandria. To Cyril's thought, it was equal blasphemy to deny that Mary was "Mother of God," and to teach the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle; and he hastened to Ephesus, with a large following of mariners, slaves, and fanatic monks, to overthrow the Nestorian heresy.[1] How far he was influenced in his action by the desire to remove a rival who, as Patriarch of Constantinople, disputed with him the primacy of the East, we can only conjecture.

Of the debates in the council of Ephesus, as in the case of previous councils, we are told little or nothing. The real question at issue, as we have seen, was between making the Logos and the man Jesus two distinct persons, and making the two so completely one that the humanity became a mere name. The course of theological debate on this theme seems to have been the following: John of Antioch, with his attendant bishops, being somewhat belated in his journey, Cyril, who was already on the ground,

[1] Gibbon, vi. 21.

refused to wait for him, called together those who were present and deposed Nestorius, condemning his doctrine. Nestorius, denying Cyril's authority, withdrew with his friends and deposed Cyril. John of Antioch, on arriving five days later, convened his priests at once and finally deposed Cyril once more; whereupon Cyril summoned his bishops again and deposed John. These results were then reported to the Emperor, who, although no enemy to Nestorius or his doctrine, was yet persuaded to ratify his deposition, and bring about a reconciliation between John and Cyril. Nestorius, although showing a conciliatory spirit to the end, and even offering to accept the disputed term,[1] yet proved unequal to the combinations made against him in Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch, was finally banished, and died in exile. The Council of Ephesus thus put the stamp of heresy on the doctrine of two distinct natures in Christ, and sanctioned the phrase "Mother of God." "For a union of two natures has taken place. Wherefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. According to which union (though not mixture) of the two natures, we confess that the Holy Virgin is Mother of God (*θεοτόκον*)."[2]

The next disturbance of the unity of the church was caused about fifteen years later, by one Eutyches, an archimandrite or abbot of Constantinople. Taking the Council of Ephesus at its word, and so holding Mary to be the Mother of God, he seems to have come to the

[1] Evag. p. 261; Soc. p. 373.
[2] Hefele's Conciliengeschichte, ii. 262, n.

very natural conclusion, in which he had many earlier theologians of high repute to sustain him, that if it was God who was born of the Virgin, it could not have been man; that from the moment when the Logos entered into the flesh, the human became absorbed in the divine, and had thenceforth no real existence. "I allow," said Eutyches, "that the Lord was produced from two natures before their union, but I confess only one nature after their union."[1] Christ then was of one nature only, and that a divine nature. Christ was really and exclusively God.[2]

But church doctrines and decrees of councils are not to be taken so literally, or interpreted by such obstinate logic. Although for the purpose of condemning Nestorius, it might be very well to declare that God himself was born of the Virgin, yet what was to be done with certain embarrassing conclusions to which that doctrine pointed? If it was God who was born, then it was certainly God who suffered, and God also who died upon the cross. Was the church ready for this confession?

Not wholly, it seemed. Indeed, the agitation caused in Constantinople in 448, when Eutyches declared that there was only one nature in Christ, could only be compared with the agitation in Constantinople in 428, when Nestorius declared that there were two natures in Christ. There were not two, it seems; neither was there but one. To common minds the position would seem to be critical; and the religion which consists in verbal definitions to be

[1] Evagrius, 267. [2] Baur, ii. 113, 114.

driven at last to the wall. But to an imperial church, sustained by the strong arm of military power, everything is possible; and although it required two more councils to do it, the impossible was finally achieved.

The position taken by Eutyches, as I have said, caused great excitement in Constantinople, and induced the Patriarch Flavian to summon a local synod by which Eutyches was condemned, and the doctrine of *one nature* declared heresy. Eutyches, however, who happened to have friends at the imperial court, appealed from this decree to a general council, which was therefore summoned to meet, once more in Ephesus, in 449. The picture of this council, known to history by the significant name of the "Robber Council," is so vividly sketched by one of the earlier historians (Evagrius), and is so significant, even in its excesses, of the character of those theological controversies out of which church doctrine has been born, that I am led to describe it in as much detail as my space will allow.

This council was summoned, in regular form, by both the Emperors, and consisted according to one account of 360 bishops, though another account makes the number much less. The leader of the council was the successor of Cyril, the hardly less ferocious Dioscurus of Alexandria. Sympathizing naturally with the views of Eutyches, and holding, very justly, that in his condemnation Cyril was himself condemned, Dioscurus went to Ephesus bent simply upon reinstating Eutyches at whatever cost, and by whatever methods. He was not unattended; but, like

Cyril before him, took with him what Evagrius calls a "disorderly rabble,"[1] consisting of Asiatic veterans, a band of archers, and a crowd of turbulent monks, who carried consternation to the hearts of the peaceful inhabitants of Ephesus, and did brave service for their leader throughout the debates.[2]

The order of proceedings seems to have been: first, to expel from the chamber all reporters not belonging to the party of Dioscurus; then to read the acts of the Synod of Constantinople by which Eutyches had been condemned. This reading was constantly interrupted by the howls of Dioscurus's Egyptian monks, who took this method of showing their horror of heresy, and their zeal for a pure Christianity. Basil, Bishop of Seleucia, being reported as saying, "I worship the one Lord Jesus Christ . . . in two natures," the monks shouted, "Nestorian! Tear him asunder! Burn him alive! As he divided so let him be divided!" — the most fearful pun on record, I suppose. When the reading was finished, and condemnation pronounced upon the former Synod, these shouts were redoubled. "Anathema to him that parts! Anathema to him that divides! Drive out, burn, tear, cut asunder, massacre all who hold two natures!"[3] The noisy monks were not restrained by the presiding officer; on the contrary, those who could not "roar" loud enough to add to the clamor, were besought by Dioscurus to

[1] Evag. p. 290.
[2] Gibbon, vi. 26, 28.
[3] Evag. p. 320; Robertson, i. 481; Gibbon, vi. 28.

"stretch out their hands" in token of assent and encouragement.

Nor were these the only means employed by the politic Dioscurus to accomplish the restoration of Eutyches. A letter to the council in condemnation of Eutyches, from Leo, Bishop of Rome, instead of being publicly read, was quietly suppressed. Forged passages were introduced into the acts as finally passed; a fact which was elicited at the next council by an examination of the actors in this, and of which Stephen, Bishop of Ephesus, gives the following interesting explanation: "The notaries of Dioscurus seized the fingers of my notaries, so that they were in danger of most grievous treatment."[1] Finally, when the vote was to be taken, and the prelates embraced the knees of Dioscurus, entreating him to spare them the necessity of deposing their Patriarch for condemning Eutyches, Dioscurus exclaimed, "Do you mean to raise a sedition? Where are the officers?" Instantly a furious multitude of monks and soldiers with swords, clubs, and chains, burst into the church, driving the terrified bishops into the corners, and under the tables and seats, from which they were not suffered to emerge until they had promised to sign a blank paper, which was afterwards filled out with the deposition of Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople. The unhappy Flavian, who was present, suffered indignities greater than deposition. According to the testimony of two different historians, he was so beaten, kicked, and stamped

[1] Evag. p. 319.

upon by the Patriarch of Alexandria that he died of his injuries. Whoever inflicted the wounds, it is quite certain that within three days he was dead.[1]

Thus ended the second council of Ephesus, by which the decrees of the Synod of Constantinople were reversed, and the doctrine of Eutyches, which for a year had been heresy, was pronounced Orthodox. According to the Orthodoxy of 449, Christ had not two natures, he had but one. I take pleasure in closing the narrative with the words of Evagrius: "Here let not any of the deluded worshippers of idols presume to sneer, as if it were the business of succeeding councils to depose their predecessors, and to be ever devising some additions to our faith."[2] This protest becomes even more opportune, two years later, after the Council of Chalcedon.

Entire acquiescence in an edict thus procured was hardly to be looked for even in an age accustomed to such methods of religious disputes; still less as immediately after the council, a change in the imperial household brought about a change in the theological atmosphere of the East. In the year 450 Theodosius died, and Marcion became Emperor; which means that the Alexandrian church passed out of favor, and Eutychian doctrines were consequently discredited at court. After two years of ill-gotten triumph, the Monophysite theory of Christ's nature must cease to be the Orthodox faith of Christendom.

In 451, the influence of Leo, Bishop of Rome, in

[1] Gibbon, vi. 29. [2] Evag. p. 270.

whom the coming power of the Papacy was already foreshadowed, and whose letter to the previous council had been so arbitrarily suppressed, caused what is commonly reckoned the Fourth General Council to be summoned at Chalcedon, expressly to reverse the decrees of Ephesus, and end the weary and disgraceful strife over the nature of Christ.

The proceedings of this council do not seem to have differed essentially from those of its predecessors, and certainly bore no closer resemblance to the acts of a deliberative assembly, even if it won no such unenviable name. Not only was it so constituted that its decisions were secure in advance, but many of the same furious and intimidating cries were heard which had struck terror to the hearts of the Nestorian prelates at Ephesus. The robbers seemed to be still in council. When the Nicæan creed, which this council reaffirmed with certain additions, was read, the bishops shouted, "This is the faith of the Orthodox! thus we all believe! thus does Pope Leo believe! thus did Christ believe! thus has the Pope expounded."[1] When the "Epistle of the divine Cyril" was read, the whole Synod exclaimed, "Thus do we all believe! Anathema to him that divides and to him that confounds! [The theology of these howls had advanced somewhat.] This is the faith of Leo! Thus do we all believe! As Cyril believed so do we!"[2] "But few are exclaiming," complained one of the prelates, "the Synod is not speaking." Whereupon the Oriental

[1] Evag. p. 328. [2] Id. p. 330.

bishops cried, "Egyptians to exile!" Illyrians: "We entreat compassion on all." Orientals: "Egyptians to exile!" Illyrians: "We entreat compassion." Orientals: "Dioscurus to exile! Egyptians to exile! The heretic to exile!" Illyrians: "We have all erred! Indulgence to all! Dioscurus to the Synod! Dioscurus to the churches!"[1] Finally, when Dioscurus was deposed: "Anathema to Dioscurus! Christ has deposed Dioscurus! Cast out such persons! Away with the outrage! Away with the infamy from the Synod!"[2]

To depose and condemn Dioscurus was comparatively easy, for passion and ambition were strong; but to prepare a new statement of faith which should meet the views of all parties, and steer a clear course between opposing heresies, was not so easy, and seems to have been accomplished only after a hint from the Emperor that "unless the bishops framed a rule of faith they might be assured that the Synod would be held at the West."[3] Finally, at the fifth or sixth meeting of the council, the new formula was announced, reaffirming the Edict of Nicæa, and adding, with a great deal beside, the following words: "Since some reject the term 'Mother of God,' others mould into one the natures of the flesh and of the Godhead . . . we confess one and the same Son, at the same time perfect in manhood, and perfect in Godhead, born of Mary, Mother of God, and made known in [or out of] two natures without confusion, conversion, severance, separation; the differences of nature by no means

[1] Evag. p. 332. [2] Id. p. 335. [3] Id. p. 336.

annulled by union, but the peculiar essence of each preserved and conspiring in one person and one subsistence, not parted or severed into two." [1]

And now what exact doctrine do we find beneath this profusion of words? How did the Council of Chalcedon solve the apparently insoluble problem which, as we have seen, was given it? To say that Christ was of one nature, as you remember, would be Eutychian; to say that he was of two natures would be Nestorian. How did the council escape this Scylla and Charybdis of heresy?

By the simplest process possible. It accepted both statements and declared them one. Creating for the purpose a convenient distinction between nature and person, it declared that in Christ were *two* natures in *one* person. Christ is not a mixture of Deity and humanity, no more is he one to the exclusion of the other; he is at once perfect God and perfect man, as divine as Deity, as human as humanity. Such, since the Council of Chalcedon, has been the creed of Christian Orthodoxy.

In other words, standing between these two heresies, the new creed stretched out loving arms and embraced them both. The Creed of Chalcedon is as Nestorian as Nestorius, it is as Eutychian as Eutyches; it affirms the two natures as broadly as the one, it declares the one nature (under the name of person) as plainly as the other; and with sublime effrontery, asserts that two doctrines, each of which excludes the other, and each of which in turn had been condemned as heresy, and both

[1] Evag. p. 300. Comp. Hefele's Conciliengeschichte, ii. 468–472.

of which no human mind has ever succeeded in grasping at once, are both together true.

The lesson thus taught was well learned. The so-called Athanasian Creed, of which I have already spoken, which was composed after this period, and perhaps grew out of this very controversy, and which stands to-day as the most complete enunciation of the Trinitarian faith, consists of little else than a series of mutually destructive propositions like the above, made one by solemnly pronouncing them so. "By its repetition of positive and negative propositions," says an Orthodox historian of doctrines, "its perpetual assertion and then again denial of its propositions, the mystery of the doctrine is presented as it were in hieroglyphics, as if to confound the understanding."[1] "As is the Father, so is the Son, so also the Holy Ghost. The Father is not created; the Son is not created; the Holy Ghost is not created. . . . The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Ghost is eternal: yet there are not three Eternals; there is one Eternal. So there are not three Uncreated; there is one Uncreated. In like manner, the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, the Holy Ghost is almighty; yet there are not three Almighties, there is one Almighty. In like manner the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God; yet are there not three Gods, there is one God. In like manner the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Ghost is Lord; yet are there not three Lords, there is one Lord. It is also the true faith that we confess that

[1] Hagenbach's Hist. of Doctrines, i. 269.

our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, is God and man. Perfect God and Perfect man. Like the Father in his Deity, less than the Father in his humanity. And although God and man, yet is he not two, but one Christ. One, not by confusion of substance, but in the unity of Person."[1]

How entirely arbitrary, and how foreign to New Testament thought, is the distinction here made between "substance" and "person," or between "nature" and "person," is proved, not only by the fact that the distinction now for the first time appears, but also by the great difficulty experienced in finding words to express the distinction. The Greek word here used for "person" (ὑπόστασις) means originally the same as that used for substance (οὐσία). The true meaning of both is substance, essence, nature. The correct translation of Heb. i. 3, the only passage in the New Testament where hypostasis is found in connection with Christ, is "image of his *being*." As late as in the Nicæan Creed the two words are placed side by side, as if exact equivalents, "those that say that the Son of God is of a different being or substance," (ὑπόστασις or οὐσία). Again, how slightly the word translated "nature" (φύσις) originally differed from that translated "person," is sufficiently proved by the fact that while in the discussions at Nicæa the former (φύσις) was employed to express that which distinguishes the one nature from the other, and the latter (ὑπόστασις) to express that which both have in common,

[1] Creed of Athanasius.

the Confession of Chalcedon exactly reverses this use of the two words.[1] Between 325 and 451, the necessities of Christian theology, demanding certain distinctions which had never before been made, had determined that ὑπόστασις should henceforth mean person; φύσις, nature; οὐσία, substance; and that in this distinction of names the doctrine of the Trinity should rest.

That the Council of Chalcedon did not end this controversy, or that its creed was no more accepted as a finality than were the many which had preceded it, I need hardly assure you. Indeed, the descriptive term Monophysite ("of one nature") first came into vogue at this time, to designate the large party in the church, which, following in the steps of Eutyches, still insisted that two natures made two persons, and that to call Christ one person was equivalent to assigning him a single nature. I have space here only for names; yet the very titles of the various parties which sprang up in this same century have a certain significance, as showing through what giddy regions, and between what impalpable distinctions, theology was then holding its unsteady course. Among the sects whose names have survived, are the Theopaschites, who declared that "God was crucified," a doctrine which in 533 was admitted into an Orthodox confession,[2] the Aphthartodocetes and Phartolatres, the latter asserting, the former denying, that Christ's body was perishable; the Actistetes and Ktistolatres, the former asserting, the latter

[1] Hagenbach, i. 279; also Stanley's East. Church, pp. 231, 234.
[2] Baur, ii. 118.

denying, that Christ's body, after the entrance of the Holy Ghost, was uncreated; the Agnoetes, who claimed that if Christ was really man like us, he could not have been omniscient.[1]

The Monophysite faith, as such, can be found to-day, I believe, only in the churches of the East; its followers being called, in Alexandria, Copts, in Armenia, Armenians, in Syria and Mesopotamia, Jacobites.[2] Without its formidable name, however, it can easily be encountered in any Orthodox community in Christendom; this being the special form of error, apparently, into which the new convert to Orthodoxy is most liable to fall before his natural reason has learned to thread the intricate path which in Orthodox regions leads between nature on the one hand, and person on the other.[3]

I am aware how uninviting and how bewildering must seem to many of you these controversies of an age fortunately long gone by; nor can I hope that I have made as clear to you as I would like the bearing which they have upon the faith of Christendom to-day. To show this as plainly as possible, however, let me present once more, in a few words, the ground over which I have just tried to lead you.

The doctrine of the Trinity, as half stated at Nicæa in 325, and completed at Constantinople in 381, left still undecided the relation of the divine and human natures in Christ. Two views were possible, and were each in

[1] Baur, ii. 120. [2] Gieseler's Church Hist. i. 327.
[3] Comp. Chris. Ex., 1860, p. 265, article by F. H. Hedge, D. D.

turn held and considered Orthodox; according to the one the divine and the human in Christ were wholly distinct, though intimately united: according to the other, the divine nature alone was real, while the humanity became absorbed and disappeared. To take the one position seemed to make two beings instead of one; to take the other seemed to make the human Jesus a spectre or fiction.

The church in its Creed of Chalcedon quietly took both positions at once, as though there were no contradiction between them. It declared that in Christ were two natures in one person.

February 1, 1874.

V.

THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY.

THE nature of Christ and his relation to God were not the only questions which troubled the early church. They were the first, as was natural; yet long before they were finally settled, others were pressing for an answer. Not one of the fundamental truths of religion was found to be decided for Christendom in advance. If the nature of God was left undetermined by the Christian Scriptures, no less so, as it proved, was the nature of man. The time came, of course, when the Christian mind descended from regions of abstract speculation, and began to consider the problems of actual life. Life was full of temptation and evil. Human nature itself seemed sinful and perverted. How came it so? Whence did sin come and how was it to be rooted out? How far was man himself responsible for it, or capable of resisting it? How did Christianity help him in overcoming it?

So far as the Bible was concerned, these questions stood on the same footing with that in regard to the nature of Christ. The Scriptures, when interrogated, gave an equivocal reply. They presented two distinct theories of human nature.

In the Gospels, as you know, although no doctrine is laid down on this point more than on others, yet man is represented in the simplest and most natural way, as a responsible moral being, who is to "do the will of his Father in heaven," to love his neighbor and his enemy alike, to use whatever talents were given him, whether five or two, and to win the kingdom of heaven by righteousness. Had the Gospels alone constituted Christianity, this would have been the simple code of Christian morals. In the Epistles of Paul, however, another theory appears. Unexpected exigencies had arisen, as we know, before Paul wrote, and his doctrine shaped itself according to the new necessities. If the Gentiles were to enter the kingdom of heaven on equal terms with the Jews, and even before them; in other words, if Israel had been promised the Kingdom and the Messiah, as they certainly had, yet had not received them; why was it? These questions were certainly asked, and Paul found no answer ready but that which he gives so explicitly in the Epistle to the Romans. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel."[1] Just as Jehovah, of his own arbitrary choice, had selected one rather than another from the seed of Abraham, saying, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated,"[2] so he had again chosen the Gentiles before the Jews. But was this not unjust? No! there is no injustice with God. His will is his law, which no one must question.[3] Had he not said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have com-

[1] Rom. ix. 6. [2] ix. 13; Mal. i. 2, 3. [3] Rom. ix. 20.

passion on whom I will have compassion."[1] Nay, had he not hardened Pharaoh's heart, for the very purpose of showing his own power and glory?[2] Not only therefore hath he mercy on whom he will, but "whom he will he hardeneth."[3] Man's merit does not come into the question. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."[4] The rejection of the Jew and acceptance of the Gentile are part of the eternal plan of God. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate; whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified."[5] To be sure, there is a "remnant" of the Jews still to be saved; but, even this is not through their desert, but only because by God's grace they were elected to be saved. "Even so at the present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works."[6] It is God's grace alone that saves one and condemns another. And God's grace is won, not by the works of the law, but by faith in Christ. Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness;" so we, "being justified by faith, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."[7] Indeed, in Christ the curse of sin and death which came upon the race in Adam, was finally removed. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; . . . even so by the righteousness of

[1] Rom. ix. 15; Ex. xxxiii. 19. [2] Rom. ix. 17; Ex. ix. 16.
[3] Rom. ix. 18. [4] Rom. ix. 16. [5] Rom. viii. 29, 30.
[6] Rom. xi. 5, 6. [7] Rom. iv. 3; v. 1.

one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."[1] How far Paul would have modified this rigid theory had he undertaken to discuss the general problem of evil, instead of simply meeting an immediate perplexity, we cannot tell; but such is his reply to his fellow-countrymen who ask him why the teachings of all the prophets have been reversed, and the Jew is cut off while the Gentile is saved.

Such being the two views of human nature presented by the Christian Scriptures, we cannot be surprised at finding once more a corresponding difference in the teachings of the church Fathers. At first the Gospel view seems to have prevailed almost universally; Paul's doctrines either not being familiarly known, or being considered, as they really were, intended for the first century rather than for the second or third. That man was naturally corrupt, or had lost the power to do right, or, however affected by Adam's fall, was in any way involved in Adam's guilt, are thoughts that do not seem to have disturbed the minds of those early generations. There is Orthodox authority for saying that no Greek Father, no Alexandrian theologian, not even the great father of Orthodoxy, Athanasius himself, admitted any theory of Adam's sin which robbed man of the power to do right, or touched his moral freedom.[2]

Says Clemens of Alexandria, "Man is the most beautiful hymn to the praise of Deity."[3] Says Tertullian, who

[1] Rom. v. 12, 18.

[2] Comp. Hagenbach's Hist. of Doctrines, i. 148, 160, &c.

[3] Coh. p. 78. Quoted by Hagenbach.

came as near as any of the earlier writers to the later thought of Augustine, "Man, though not naturally good, becomes so by free determination. God gave the law that man might submit his will to the divine, and so exalt himself to the angels." "The soul of man springs from the breath of God, intelligent in its own nature, free, rational, supreme." Even in its state of corruption, "there is a portion of good in the soul of that original divine and genuine good which is its proper nature. For that which is derived from God is rather obscured than extinguished." "Some men are very good, some very bad; but even in the worst is something good, and in the best something bad." "As no soul is without sin, so none is without the seeds of good."[1]

The Jewish narrative of the Fall was very differently interpreted by different church teachers; some taking it literally, others, and I think the greater number, understanding it as pure allegory. According to Clemens of Alexandria, "Moses, describing allegorically divine prudence, called it the tree of life, and placed it in Paradise."[2] Origen called the narrative "A type of what takes place in free moral agents everywhere and at all times."[3] "Who that has understanding," says Origen with characteristic frankness, "will suppose that the first, second, and third day, evening and morning, existed without sun, moon, and stars, and that the first day was without sky? And who so foolish as to suppose that God, after the manner of a husbandman, planted a paradise, and

[1] De Anima, xxii; xli. [2] Strom. v. 11. [3] See Hagen. i. 161.

placed in it a tree of life, visible and palpable, so that one tasting of the fruit by bodily teeth, obtained life." [1]

But whatever their interpretation of the Scripture narrative, these Fathers were quite agreed that man's freedom of will and power of excellence remained unimpaired by Adam's sin. On this point their language was explicit. "Free-will," says Irenæus, "is the mark of the ineffaceable image of God, and the condition of faith." [2] "Man being endowed with reason, and in this respect like to God, having been made free in his will, and with power over himself, is himself the cause to himself that sometimes he becomes wheat and sometimes chaff." [3] "Punishments and good rewards," says Justin Martyr, "are rendered according to the merit of each man's action. For if it be fated that this man be good, and this other evil, neither is the former meritorious nor the latter blamed. For neither would a man be worthy of reward or praise did he not of himself choose good, but were created for this end; nor if he were evil, would he be worthy of punishment, not being evil of himself, but being able to be nothing but what he was made." [4] "Entire freedom of will," says Tertullian, "was conferred on man, so that as master of himself he might constantly encounter good by spontaneous observance of it, and evil by spontaneous avoidance. But reward, neither of good nor of evil, could be paid to man who was good or evil through necessity and not choice." [5] "The nature of good," says

[1] De Prin. iv. 16. [2] See Neander's Dogmas, i. 183.
[3] Ag. Heresies, iv. 4, 3. [4] Apol. i. 43. [5] Marcion, ii. 6.

Tatian, "is brought to perfection in men through their freedom of choice, in order that the bad man may be justly punished, having become depraved through his own fault, but the just man deservedly praised for virtuous deeds, since in the exercise of free choice he refrained from transgressing the will of God."[1] "The end of philosophy is," says Clemens, quoting approvingly from the Stoics, "to live agreeably to nature."[2] "God will have us attain bliss by our own exertions."[3] "The Creator," says Origen once more, "gave the power of free and voluntary action; but slothfulness, and neglect of better things, furnished the beginning of departure from goodness. But to depart from good is nothing else than to be made bad. To want goodness is to be wicked."[4] In other words, sin is simply the absence of virtue; moral evil is a negative quality; a doctrine in which somewhat later Origen had the concurrence of Athanasius.[5]

It is unnecessary to extend these quotations further, as they point for the most part in one direction. Man is free; his nature though deeply stained is by no means corrupt; the fall of the first man involved at worst but an enfeeblement of man's moral power and a proneness to evil; evil and goodness are alike possible to him, and wholly dependent upon his choice; only because they are dependent upon his choice, can he be called a moral agent: this can unhesitatingly be pronounced the prevailing doctrine of the Christian church at the period

[1] Tatian, vii. [2] Tatian, ii. 283. [3] Strom. vi. 12.
[4] De Prin. ii. 9, 2. [5] Hagenbach, i. 293.

when that first serious controversy upon the question arose, which is now to occupy your attention.[1]

The controversy took its name from a certain monk, Pelagius, whose personal history, notwithstanding the important part he took in determining the doctrines of Christianity, the church has suffered to pass into almost entire oblivion. We know only that he was a monk, that he was born either in Britain or Bretagne, and that he was teaching in Rome with his companion and follower, Cœlestius, early in the fifth century. From the accounts which his opponents give us, we infer that he was a thorough and even learned student, of ascetic habits, who attacked the sins of the day with great moral earnestness, and was especially severe against such as were disposed to plead the infirmity or corruption of human nature as an excuse for their frailties.[2] Such being the character of the man, we cannot be surprised to find him teaching with great clearness and decision the doctrines which so many of the leaders of Christian thought had taught before him, and which had become more important than ever, in view of a growing tendency to rely rather upon divine grace than upon human effort.

Exactly what Pelagius taught upon these points, we learn chiefly from passages of his writings quoted against him by his adversaries, and from the acts of condemnation passed by the councils.[3] Its main positions seem to have been these: While believing implicitly in the Trinity, and

[1] Comp. Baur's Christenthum, ii. 124. [2] Nean. ii. 572–578.
[3] See Clarke's Anti-Pelag. Writings; Pref. xi.

even in eternal punishment,[1] Pelagius held: that man is wholly free in action and choice, and able to be perfectly good if he will; that Adam's sin, which differed from others only in being the first, affected his posterity only as a bad example always incites others to evil, and as evil once begun tends always to become in man a second nature, and to increase by its own momentum; that divine grace is not an absolute condition of virtue but only a help thereto, and that it strengthens man, not supernaturally by superseding his own action, but naturally, by reinforcing his endeavors, by enlightening his mind through Gospel truth, and by forgiveness of sin; that Christ was the highest pattern of righteousness, and his function to exalt humanity, not renew it;[2] that those who know nothing of Christ, and infants born where baptism is impossible, may yet be saved;[3] and finally, that man is good or bad only in so far as his action is wholly his own, and is not determined by influences beyond his control.[4]

These doctrines, as I have said, differed in no essential point from those which had always prevailed, and had been, up to that time, silently accepted in the Christian church; except, perhaps, in being more systematically and logically stated than ever before, in being applied with greater moral earnestness, as well as in being followed more persistently to their ultimate conclusions. Nor does it appear that when Pelagius and Cœlestius first preached

[1] Nean. ii. 578.
[2] Nean. ii. 617.
[3] Anti-Pelag. p. 241.
[4] Baur, ii. 124–135.

those doctrines, they aroused any serious hostility. For several years, these two labored in Rome, seeking to elevate the moral tone of the Christian community, and openly resisting what they considered a disheartening and paralyzing belief in human corruption; yet the Roman church was not disturbed by their presence, or conscious of their heresy. It was only when, in 410, they changed the field of their labors from Rome to Africa, that they became suspected or that their doctrines were challenged.

In Africa, they found themselves suddenly upon the defensive; yet even here, as is well known, not so much because of any hostile sentiment in the African church, as because of the man who happened to be at its head, and whose presence there seemed to determine, so far as any individual influence can ever determine, the religious history of the age. Certainly, no one personality has left so visible an impress of itself upon the doctrinal faith of Christendom, as has that of Saint Augustine.

Augustine, although not the most learned of the Christian Fathers, is probably the most familiarly known of them all. Almost every one has heard the story of the wild and passionate African youth, who, after a life of excessive self-indulgence, tempered only by his affection for his pious and devoted mother, Monica, suddenly forsook at once his sensual indulgences and his religious heresies, and gave himself to the exclusive service of the Catholic church. The main facts in his career are these. He was born in 354, in a little town near Carthage, was a college student in Carthage, where he distinguished him-

self alike by his unlicensed gayety and by his admiration of the Latin classics and abomination of the Greek; he was then for many years a teacher of rhetoric and oratory in Carthage and Rome, attached himself to the heretical sect of the Manichæans, led a life of unscrupulous sensualism, redeemed only by certain higher longings stirred in his soul by the teachings of Cicero, was converted by Ambrose at Milan, was baptized in 387, returned to Carthage, and in 395 was made assistant-bishop of Hippo, an important seaport town near Carthage, where he died in 430. When Pelagius came to Carthage in 410, to continue there the missionary work in which he had been engaged in Rome, Augustine was the virtual head of the African church.[1]

If we ask now, after ascribing due influence to the peculiar personal experiences through which Augustine had passed, why he so resolutely opposed doctrines which until then had been deemed innocent, there are two facts which are worthy our attention, as helping us to our answer. How much influence they are likely to have had in moulding his theological belief, I leave you to judge.

The first of these is, that at just about this period the *Church*, as an outward organization with doctrines and ordinances essential to salvation, was becoming by rapid steps a historic reality. Not even yet a complete hierarchy, with a single papal head, it had already taken ideal shape in many minds, and Augustine seems to have been one of the first to understand all that its name

[1] Comp. Confessions of Augustine.

implied. Indeed, so far did Augustine go in his estimate of the authority of the church, that he declared "he would not believe the Gospel itself, unless the Church compelled him to do so."[1] Now the central idea of the church as a hierarchy lies in its accomplishing for man what he cannot accomplish for himself; in its possessing the sole means of salvation. Through the administration of its ordinances, especially through the rite of baptism, and through this alone, man escapes damnation and enters the kingdom of God. It is evident at once, therefore, how this new necessity of Christian thought must modify the old doctrines, especially the doctrine of human freedom. The more man can do for himself, the less the church need do for him. If under any circumstances, whether by being born in heathen lands, or by dying in early infancy, one can enter heaven unbaptized, the necessity, and therefore the majesty, of the church in so far suffers.

Starting from this point, the motive is apparent, and the very process of reasoning becomes obvious, by which a mind like Augustine's could be led to his doctrine of total depravity. Baptism alone makes one a member of God's church, and thus secures salvation. Baptism, however, means the cleansing of the soul from its impurities; in other words, the forgiveness of sins. But the new-born child, which must be baptized as well as others if it is to be saved, has committed no sins; how therefore can baptism have any efficacy in its case? Only by

[1] Augustine on the Manichæan Heresy, p. 101.

supposing it sinful without sinning; that is, sinful through the sin of its parents. It must have inherited both corruption and guilt.[1]

This is arguing backward with a witness, and making the tree spring from its branches rather than its roots; yet it is no unfair statement, so far as we can now judge, of the actual logical process by which the dark doctrine of total and inherited depravity was first reached. In order to have a church which should be essential to salvation, it was seen that baptism into that church must somehow be made indispensable for all; but baptism cannot be indispensable to the child, unless it is sinful; therefore the child must be sinful; therefore we must declare every soul born corrupt. One of the explicit charges which Augustine made against Pelagius was that he "robbed children of their Savior." In other words, if the soul is born pure, as Pelagius held, it does not need to be cleansed, and so needs no Savior to cleanse it; if born impure, as Augustine held, then it must be cleansed, and so must have a Savior. Once more, the argument might strike the secular mind as somewhat peculiar; not, these little souls are in danger, therefore they must be saved, but, these little souls must be saved, therefore they are in danger. The necessity of the church must, at all hazards, be vindicated; and if without inherited guilt there can be no church, then inherited guilt we must have.

The other influence to which I have alluded as possibly modifying Augustine's theology, is to be found in the

[1] Comp. Baur, ii. 143–146.

Manichæan faith of which he was an adherent for several years before entering the true church. Manichæism is one of those mysterious religious systems, born evidently in foreign soil, which in those early years connected themselves so intimately with Christianity that it is almost impossible, at this distance, to determine whether they were Pagan religions or Christian heresies. Originating in Persia in the third century through the agency of a Persian philosopher, Manes, and offering itself at first apparently as a reformed Zoroastrian movement, Manichæism soon connected itself with Christianity, discovered in Christian doctrines its own fundamental principles, and became, through the superior purity and beauty of its moral code, so fascinating to the Christian mind, that it continued a "thorn in the flesh of the Roman church" from the third century through the Middle Ages. Among its converts was Augustine, who for nearly ten years studied its deep philosophy, and received from it certain intellectual influences from which there is abundant reason to believe that he never wholly freed himself.[1]

Manichæism solved the problem of evil in the most direct and simple style, by supposing two primitive powers in the universe, an eternal good and an eternal evil; a Prince of Light and a Prince of Darkness; Spirit and Matter; Soul and Body. In Christ, it saw the Spirit of Light coming down to free other enchained souls of light. In the Christian process of redemption, it saw the longing

[1] Augustine's Confessions, B. iv.; Baur. ii. 157; Putnam, March, 1856, p. 230, article by F. H. Hedge, D. D.

and striving of nature to purify itself, and rise out of darkness into light.[1] These ideas, notwithstanding the eager disavowals of both Augustine himself and his followers, it is impossible not to trace in those theories of human nature with which, since Augustine forsook Manichæism and entered the Christian church, Christendom has grown so familiar. According to Manichæan doctrine, good and evil are eternal; there are two souls in man, a good soul and an evil soul. According to Augustine, good and evil contend in man on equal terms; sin is a positive and independent power in the universe, divine grace is absolutely good, human nature is absolutely evil. Indeed, Augustine's ablest opponent, Julian, pointedly declared that Augustine's master, Manes, differed from his follower only in being more consistent. If man is created evil, his Creator must be the Prince of Evil, or else God must himself be evil; a logical conclusion which Manes would accept, but which Augustine arbitrarily denied.[2]

Such being the circumstances of Augustine's life, as well as the character of his mind, we can no longer be surprised to find him drawing his theories of human nature rather from Paul's Epistles than from the Gospels; or to find him offering stern resistance to the teachings of Pelagius and Cœlestius, and throwing his official influence against both the men and their doctrines. Pelagius soon left Africa for Jerusalem; but Cœlestius, who remained in Carthage, was allowed no rest until he was finally summoned before a synod to answer for his errors. The

[1] Baur, ii. 66–73. [2] Confessions, B. vii.; Baur, ii. 158.

first formal step in this controversy was the action of this synod in 412, by which Cœlestius was excommunicated for holding these six heresies: 1. Adam would have died even if he had not sinned. 2. Adam's sin injured himself alone. 3. Infants are born in the state of Adam before he fell. 4. Mankind neither died in Adam nor rose again in Christ. 5. The Law no less than the Gospel brings men to Christ. 6. There were sinless men before Christ.[1]

While these severe measures were taken in Africa, the matter seems to have been viewed in Palestine, whither Pelagius had next gone, in a very different light, and no more alarm to have been felt at his doctrines, than had been felt before in Rome. In 415, at Augustine's solicitation, a synod was called, which was soon followed by another; yet so little interest was shown, and so little hostility to Pelagius could be aroused, that no condemnation was secured.[2] Worse still, Zosimus, Bishop of Rome, whose decision in doctrinal matters, owing to the prominence which the Roman church was fast assuming, was of the utmost importance, could not be induced to discover heresy in either Pelagius or Cœlestius; but on the contrary in a letter to the bishops of North Africa, took occasion to say, "Would that some of you had been present when Pelagius's letter was read. Scarcely could some refrain from tears to find that a man so thoroughly Orthodox could yet be made the object of suspicion."[3]

[1] Augustine's Works Anti-Pelag. xi. Hefele, ii. 105.
[2] Nean. ii. 585. [3] ii. 589.

This rendered necessary those decisive measures which the ecclesiastics of earlier days knew so well how to employ when objectionable doctrines were to be condemned. A council was called in North Africa, in 418, at which nine canons were adopted, embodying the Augustinian ideas of inherited sin and grace, influences were successfully used in Rome to win over the Emperor to the North African side, imperial edicts began to appear against Pelagius and his followers, until finally the Roman bishop, Zosimus, was fairly frightened into withdrawing his former edict, and in 418, accepted the decrees of the North African Council. By these methods of theological debate, somewhat less startling, yet no less conclusive, than those employed at Nicæa and Ephesus, the final condemnation of Pelagius was secured; and the Christian church accepted, at the hands of Augustine, a theory of sin, grace, and free-will, at which Origen, Irenæus, or Tertullian would have turned pale with dismay.

It is mortifying to add, that the disgraceful rule which we have found hitherto to hold wherever refusal to subscribe to a new doctrine involved the loss of a bishopric, met with no exception here. The eighteen Italian bishops, who at first stood out on the side of Pelagius, nearly all repented in the end, and saved their sees. The only conspicuous instance to the contrary was Julian, Bishop of Apulia, whose bold denunciation of his cowardly associates, and superb vindication of the condemned heresy, constitute the single element of nobleness in this most ignoble controversy.

The theory of human nature which thus became the doctrine and belief of the Christian church, has at least the merit of great simplicity and consistency. It has, in fact, precisely the unity to be expected in the product of a single mind following a single definite purpose, and willing to carry its thoughts to their ultimate consequences. The main points of the theory are too familiar to need here, even if there were space, any but the briefest statement. Augustine simply took Paul's explanation of the rejection of the Jews, and made it, with some enlargements, a universal theory of human nature.

Adam, according to Augustine, if he had not sinned, "would not have been divested of his body, but would have been clothed upon with immortality and incorruption." Through his sin, death became the lot of man. Through his sin also human nature became burdened with infinite guilt; his guilt being imputed to the whole race. The race is wholly corrupt, therefore, and incapable of itself of any knowledge or any virtue. No effort of its own can help it, for every effort springs from its corrupt nature; it can be helped only by the free grace of God, offered through Christ. This grace is received by baptism, which cleanses the soul of its guilt. Without baptism, no soul can be saved; and baptism can be administered only by the church. The good which man accomplishes, and the salvation he secures, are through no merit of his own, but only through the grace of God.

[1] Anti-Pel. p. 5. Comp. De libero arbitrio; De Natura et Gratia; De Peccato Originali.

Not even all the baptized are saved, but only those who are elected to be saved; while all others, by God's absolute and arbitrary will, are pre-ordained to condemnation.

No system more complete, or pursuing its consequences with more relentless consistency, was ever devised. But when this is said all is said. To find any basis for the system either in reason, or in Scripture, outside of Paul's Epistles, has always proved beyond the power of its most skilful advocates. Indeed, before the death of its author, it had already been riddled through and through by Julian and others, and arguments brought against it which remain to this day unanswered.[1] From its first proposition, which involves the palpable paradox that a finite being committed an infinite sin with infinite consequences, and its second proposition relating to the imputation of Adam's guilt, which rests upon a false interpretation of Rom. v. 12,[2] to its last assertion, each statement rests for its support solely upon the ingenuity of the mind that devised it. Nevertheless, Augustine's point was gained. Ecclesiastical doctrines are determined, as it seems, not by the truth or piety that is in them, but simply by the votes that can be counted for them; and the votes of the North African church accepted Augustine and rejected Pelagius.

At the same time, although my present object is to state doctrines, not to discuss them, it is impossible to turn from this subject without some slight recognition of the

[1] Baur, ii. 147, 148. [2] Nean. ii. 609; Anti-Pel. p. 12.

deep injury done to the Christian church by laying upon it the needless burden of this most repulsive and demoralizing dogma. No single doctrine of the Orthodox creed has elicited more frequent or emphatic protests from the purer minds of Orthodoxy itself than this; if, indeed, the doctrine in its completeness can be said to have ever gained the acceptance of Catholic Christendom. So far, at least, as predestination is concerned, the doctrine remained in controversy for several centuries. At the close of the fifth century, so strong had been the opposition to the strict Augustinian dogma that three councils were found necessary to reconsider it; two of which rejected it,[1] while the third[2] reaffirmed it. In the ninth century the whole question was reopened by the monk Gottschalk, who sought to bring the church back to the doctrine of absolute predestination, but was condemned at Mentz in 848, and imprisoned for life. In 855, at the Council of Valence, this action was partially reversed, and the subject was left to later generations for its final solution.[3] Protestantism has shown itself, on the whole, more hospitable to Augustine than Romanism.

Even before Augustine's death, the natural moral consequences of the system began to appear. In 426, Augustine was urged to remonstrate with certain monks of Adrumetum, who were applying his theories in the following highly objectionable way. "Of what use," said the

[1] Arles, 472; Lyons, 475. [2] Orange, 529.

[3] Neander's Dogmas, ii. 383, 447; Baur's Christenthum, ii. 181–215.

artless monks, "are all doctrines or precepts? Human efforts can avail nothing; it is God that worketh in us to will and to do. Nor is it right to reproach or to punish those who are in error or who commit sin; for it is none of their fault that they act thus. Without grace they cannot do otherwise; nor can they do anything to merit grace."[1]

The perplexity of the monks of Adrumetum remains a perplexity to the present day. Alas for the church that must live in this constant moral bewilderment! Alas for the church which must teach itself to believe at one and the same moment that good or evil conduct does not depend on man's effort, and that man is responsible for his good or evil conduct! Alas for the community that must reconcile with its conscience a dogma which sets conscience at defiance, and must reconcile with reason a system by which all reason is abjured!

Christianity, since the hour of its birth, has had no burden laid upon it so heavy to be borne, no belief attached to it which so stirs the sorrow of its friends and the contempt of its foes, as the Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin and Predestination.

February 15, 1874.

[1] Nean. ii. 625.

VI.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

THE preceding lectures have traced the formation, during the first four centuries, of the principal Christian doctrines relating to the nature of Christ and the nature of man. I recur to the point now, to call your attention to the process by which these doctrines have been formed. That process, as you have perhaps noticed, has been in all cases the same; and would have been found the same had we examined the many other subordinate beliefs which were adopted by Christendom during the same period. Not one, as we have seen, was drawn directly from the Christian Scriptures; but each was fixed, in turn, by one or more councils, whose duty it was, in each case, to determine among several existing doctrines which should be accepted as the true belief of Christendom. Had these councils, or something corresponding with them, never been held, we should have to-day no definite or uniform articles of Christian faith. In other words, the belief of Christendom has been created, or determined, by its councils.

The question arises at this point, therefore, what were those councils, and where did they find the authority

which they assumed to fix the faith of Christendom? We find them speaking in the name of the Catholic or Universal church, and purporting to be the mouthpiece of such a church. What do they mean by this? What is this Catholic church? When and how did it come into existence, and whence did it receive its authority? It was the final appeal of all those who had the creation of doctrines in charge; upon its authority, therefore, rests the title of each and every Christian dogma. It becomes of the utmost importance, then, to know what this so-called Catholic church is.

As usual, the Scriptures do not help us in this inquiry. The name Catholic church is not to be found in the Scriptures; neither is the thing. The word "church" is found twice, it is true, in our translation of the Gospels;[1] but even in those cases it might and probably should be otherwise translated. The original term "ecclesia" had at that time no ecclesiastical signification whatever, but was the word commonly employed by the Greeks to denote any general gathering of the people. It meant "assembly;" and is the same word which in another place[2] is correctly translated "assembly." When Jesus used it or its equivalent, therefore, on the occasions mentioned above, the disciples would naturally understand him as alluding to the body of his followers in general, whether united in an ecclesiastical organization or not. That Jesus himself created no such organization, does not need to be proved to those who read in Scrip-

[1] Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17. [2] Acts xix. 39.

ture language only what is there. Not only do the Gospels give no hint of such an act, but they show no such desire on the part of Jesus himself. He seems to have no purpose or anxiety beyond the simple utterance of his lofty thought, and its practical exemplification in a holy life. It is an indisputable fact that no evidence exists of any steps on his part towards separating his followers from the synagogues, or uniting them in a distinct body by themselves. Jesus left his followers, so far as ecclesiastical organization is concerned, just as he found them.

The testimony of the Gospels on this point is repeated by the Book of Acts. If Jesus founded no church, no more do his immediate disciples seem to have done so. I have already pointed out the fact that in the only accounts which we have of the disciples who gathered in Jerusalem after Jesus' death, there is nothing in their outward observances to distinguish them from their fellow Jews. They evidently continued for some time, not only to read and honor the Jewish Scriptures, but also to frequent, as before, the Jewish Temple and synagogues, to observe the Jewish fasts and feasts, to take upon themselves Jewish vows, and to practise the most distinctive Jewish rites.[1] They did not even call themselves by any peculiar name. They "were called Christians first in Antioch;"[2] and even then did not give themselves the name, but apparently received it from others. Had any visitors in Jerusalem, during the first ten or

[1] Lecture i. [2] Acts xi. 26.

twenty years after Jesus' death inquired after his disciples, they would probably have been referred to a group of Jews living together as one large family, and distinguished from other Jews almost exclusively by their firm hope of seeing Jesus return among them as the promised Messiah. While they waited for his coming, and with that coming for the overthrow of all existing kingdoms and churches, there was slight motive, certainly, for organizing themselves into a permanent religious body.

The first approach to separate organization was apparently in the case of the bodies called together in different regions by the preaching of Paul, Barnabas, and their companions. Over these, teachers and elders (presbyters) seem to have presided, as over Jewish synagogues; and the relation between apostle and disciple was such that Paul could address his followers as members together with himself, in equal honor, of the one body of Christ.[1] The tone in which both Paul and Peter always address their readers, as well as the few facts which appear from the narratives, shows plainly that even they claim no authority over their congregations, but are simply their freely appointed leaders. "Not that we have dominion over your faith," said Paul to the Corinthians, "but are helpers in your joy."[2] Such continued to be the condition of Christendom down to the close of the Apostolic age. Churches there already were at Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Thessalonica, and other spots, but under no

[1] 1 Cor. xii.

[2] 2 Cor. i. 24; Comp. Baur's Christenthum, i. 242.

single head, and with no further organization evidently than was needed for the simplest church life. Their only officers seem to have been the little band called sometimes "elders" (πρεσβύτεροι), sometimes "overseers" (ἐπίσκοποι),[1] whose functions corresponded probably with those of the elders of the synagogues. In later days the "overseers" became a distinct body from the "elders," and in course of time became bishops.

Of the ecclesiastical condition of Christendom in the age immediately following that of the Apostles, we know of course but little. We can form some idea of it, however, from this passage, found in the First Epistle of Clemens of Rome to the Corinthians, written, if the Epistle is genuine, about the end of the first century, at a time evidently when the Corinthians had been setting aside some church officers who were distasteful to them: "We see how you have put out some who lived respectably among you, from the ministry, which by their innocence they had adorned." "Now we cannot think that these may be justly thrown out of their ministry, who were either appointed by the Apostles or afterwards chosen by other eminent men, with the consent of the whole church."[2] "Do ye, therefore, submit yourselves unto your elders."[3] From this passage it would appear that at the close of the first century there were no bishops as

[1] Acts xx. 17, 28; Phil. i. 1; Tit. i. 5.

[2] Clemens, 1 Cor. xix. 18, 21. Comp. Lightfoot's "Two Epis. of S. Clement," — also Schwegler's Nachapostolische Zeitalter, ii. 125.

[3] Clemens, 1 Cor. xxiv. 15.

distinct from elders, and that the separate churches still assumed the privilege of ridding themselves of obnoxious leaders, while at the same time the need of a stricter organization and of a central authority was beginning to be felt.

During the second century, as we are not surprised to learn, this simple primitive conception of the Christian church underwent serious modifications. The perfect equality of elder with elder and people with clergy, the simple recognition of each other as "members together" of Christ's body, which had been sufficient apparently for earlier times,[1] could not bear the strain of conflicting doctrines within and threatening philosophies without. The leaders of the church began to assume higher authority, and the church itself to be viewed with greater reverence. "Where the church is," said Irenæus, before the close of the second century, "there is the Spirit of God." "It is only at the breast of the church that one can be nursed to life." "He who separates himself from this church, renounces the fellowship of the Holy Spirit."[2] A still more significant word did Irenæus and his contemporaries use, when they borrowed from Greek philosophy the term applied to its schools or sects, and called the doctrines of their opponents "heresies."[3] An established Christian truth there was by this time then, any departure from which could be treated as error. Where did they find this truth? In the Christian Scriptures? Not at all. No one seems in those days to have sought it there.

[1] Neander's Dogmas, i. 219. [2] Id. i. 209. [3] Baur, i. 233.

"When heretics are refuted from Scriptures, they accuse these same Scriptures and say they are ambiguous."[1] Irenæus found it in the spoken traditions of the Apostles, handed down to their successors. "Suppose there arise a dispute," he says, "relative to important questions among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient churches, with which the Apostles had intercourse, and learn from them what is certain and clear?" "It is within the power of all to contemplate clearly the *tradition of the Apostles;* and we are in position to reckon up those who were by Apostles instituted bishops in our churches, and the succession of these to our times." "Since it would be tedious to reckon up the succession of all churches, we indicate the tradition of our great, very ancient, universally known church, founded and organized at Rome by those two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul, as also the faith preached to men which comes down to us by means of the succession of bishops Linus, Anacletus, Clement, Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus, Teleophorus, Hyginus, Pius, Arnictus, Soter, Eleutherius. There is much abundant proof that one and the same faith has been preserved in the church from the Apostles till now and handed down in truth."[2] "The Apostles, like rich men in a bank, lodged in the hands of the church all things pertaining to truth. She is the entrance to life."[3] The church then was taking form. It was the depository of truth; it had a divine succession of bishops; it had a divine tradition; it could speak of heresies.

[1] Iren. Ag. Her. ii. [2] Id. iii. [3] Id. iv.

Let it not be supposed, however, that this view was already universally accepted. "Why find fault with Christian heresies?" said Origen, nearly fifty years later. "Heresies are found also in medicine and philosophy. They arise through the earnest desire of many literary men to become acquainted with the doctrines of Christianity."[1] Says Tertullian, with delightful freedom: "You say the church has power of forgiving sins? But whence this right? From the passage,[2] 'I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven,' &c.? But what sort of a man art thou, subverting the manifest intention of the Lord, conferring the gift personally on Peter? '*On thee*,' I will build my church. 'I will give to *thee*' the keys, not 'to the church.' Whatsoever 'thou, Peter,' shalt bind, not 'they.' What has this to do with the church! The church, it is true, will forgive sins, but it will be the church of the Spirit, by means of a spiritual man, not the church which is made of a number of bishops."[3]

The claims of the Episcopate found fullest assertion, at this period, in the writings of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage from 248 to 258. "There is one God," he says, "and Christ is one, and there is one church, and one chair founded upon a rock. Another altar, or new priesthood, cannot be made. If any shall join a heretical faction, let him know that he cannot afterwards return to the church and communicate with the bishops and people of Christ."[4] "Lest they cut and tear the one body of the Catholic

[1] Celsus, xii.
[2] Matt. xvi. 19.
[3] Tertull. on Modesty, xxi.
[4] Cyprian, Epis. xxxix.

church . . . let them acknowledge and understand that when a bishop is once made another can by no means be appointed."[1] "Whoever he may be, and whatever he may be, he who is not in the church of Christ is not a Christian."[2] "We cannot be saved but by the one only baptism of the one church."[3] Cyprian seems to have used these words in the most literal sense, and without any thought of the "invisible church," which in later times became a favorite conception. "In his view," says Neander, "the church was an outward organism, founded by Christ, of which the bishops were the pillars." Outside the church was no truth whatever. "It is of no avail," says Cyprian, "what any man teaches; it is enough that he teaches out of the church."[4]

By the middle of the third century, then, the idea of the Universal church began to be familiar. But who are the members of that church, was a question still to be settled. Does the outward rite of baptism alone constitute one a member of the body of Christ, or must there be some inward purity or personal worth as well? This was the question which arose in the Donatist controversy in the fourth century. On the occasion of the election of a bishop in Carthage, in 311, the party of Donatus refused to recognize the new bishop, on the ground that he had been ordained by one who was morally unworthy to perform the functions of the church. In other words, they claimed that the church of Christ demanded purity in its members

[1] Cyprian, Epis. xx.
[2] Id. li. 24.
[3] Id. lxxxiii. 11.
[4] Nean. Dogmas, i. 222.

and worthiness in its officers; that the church consisted, "not of a certain number of baptized people, but of such as possessed inward holiness."[1] "Whoever is shown to be a Christian in a right and lawful manner is to me a Catholic," said the Donatist.

This is high ground certainly, and would seem eminently in keeping with the spiritual temper of Christianity. But to the idea of an outward church, involving of course some indubitable badge of membership, it was found to be fatal; and the contest could only result, as it did, in fixing more firmly than before the conception of an organized and divinely instituted hierarchy, the sanctity of whose rites was independent of the character of those who administered them. Donatism was suppressed; and one earnest effort to spiritualize the conception of a Christian church wholly failed.[2] "No one attains to salvation and eternal life," said Augustine in opposing this schismatic party a century later, "who has not Christ for his head. But no one can have Christ for a head who does not belong to his body, which is the church."[3] The true body of Christ, according to Augustine, was the great Catholic church "spread throughout the world." No matter how bad the character of the officiating priest might be, his official act, be it baptism or other sacramental rite, lost none of its innate sanctity. The church, in all its parts, was divine. Its authority was final, even in questions of revealed truth. The Scriptures themselves,

[1] Nean. ii. 182–217.
[2] Baur. ii. 220–226.
[3] Nean. ii. 204.

as we have seen, Augustine accepted only because the church sanctioned them.[1]

To close this part of the subject, let me quote once more the edict of Theodosius, issued in 380, to which I have before alluded in another connection: "According to the discipline of the Apostles and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe the sole Deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, under an equal majesty and a pious Trinity. We authorize the followers of this doctrine to assume the title of *Catholic Christians;* and as we judge that all others are extravagant madmen, we brand them with the impious name of heretics; and declare that their conventicles shall no longer usurp the respectable appellation of churches."[2]

Even at the end of the fourth century, however, the church was far from complete. One serious difficulty still remained. So long as there were many heads over the church, whether bishops, archbishops, or patriarchs, there was danger, of course, of divided councils. The perfect unity of the church plainly demanded that one should be exalted above the rest. The logical necessity which out of the primitive idea of an outward authority for Christian faith had already evolved an outward hierarchy, receiving inspiration from the Apostles and so from Christ himself, could not be satisfied until that hierarchy had a single supreme head. The voice of the Apostolic church must be distinct and certain. The next historical step, therefore, was clear. Long before the days of the

[1] See Lecture V. [2] Gibbon, iii. 395.

popes it was a foregone conclusion that one bishop should rise above his fellows. As early as the third century, each province had its patriarch. Among the patriarchs one must in time become supreme.

Not quite so clear was it, however, to whom this leadership should fall. For the first two or three centuries the East seemed the natural home and centre of Christendom. If neither Jerusalem nor Antioch could claim to be the leading see, it might perhaps be Alexandria or Constantinople. It was only by degrees that the Roman church took highest rank; although a certain precedence was always granted it, because of its claim to unbroken lineage from the Apostles themselves. In the second century Irenæus spoke of "our great, very ancient, and universal Roman church, founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul."[1] Cyprian, too, in the next century, spoke of "the Chair of Peter, the principal church whence sprang the unity of the priesthood."[2] But this was very far from conceding the absolute supremacy of the Roman church, or indeed granting it any peculiar authority. It was more venerable than the rest, but not over them. Cyprian himself, in a dispute with the bishop of Rome, wholly refused to be governed by his decision, and insisted that "each bishop must act independently, according to his own conscience."[3] The Chair of Peter, although "principal," was by no means supreme. Indeed in the time of Irenæus, as we have seen, it was not considered the "Chair

[1] Ag. Heresies, iii. [2] Nean. Hist. i. 214. [3] Nean. Dogmas, i. 223.

of Peter," but of "Peter and Paul." The church of Rome had two founders. Origen was far from Orthodox on the point of Peter's connection with the church. When Jesus said, "Upon this Rock I will build my church,"[1] he meant that the church was founded on all who acknowledged Christ as the Son of God. All true followers of Christ, according to Origen, are "Peters"; that is, Rock-men. The Kingdom of God consists of such true disciples; this is the church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.[2]

At the Council of Nicæa, in 325, among 318 bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs, no one was considered supreme, nor did any receive other honor than was due to their personal dignity, their years, or the political importance of their sees. The church of Rome was represented only by deputies. Foremost among those present was the aged Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, the only one in the assembly who bore the official title of Pope; the term pope (papa, or father) being a title of Eastern derivation applied at first to all priests indiscriminately, but afterwards reserved for the chief of the Egyptian church.[3] In 325 it seems there was no pope of Rome, but there was a pope of Alexandria.

The growing influence of the church of Rome, owing especially to political causes, was very evident at the two councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon,[4] at which time the support of Leo, the bishop of Rome, was eagerly sought

[1] Matt. xvi. 18. [2] Nean. Dogmas, i. 224.
[3] Stanley's East. Church, p. 188 and note. [4] A.D. 449; A.D. 451.

by both parties to the Eutychian controversy. In the Council of Ephesus the main charge against Dioscurus, its leader, was that he had suppressed a letter of Leo denouncing Eutyches. In the Council of Chalcedon a letter from Leo was made the basis of the creed which was finally adopted; and the reading of the creed was interrupted by such shouts as these from the assembled bishops: "This is the faith of the Orthodox; thus do we all believe; thus does Pope Leo believe; thus did Christ believe; thus has the Pope expounded."[1] It is not to be necessarily inferred from these shouts, however, that the bishop of Rome was already recognized as pope of the Christian church. The title seems to have been given to Leo only by his followers; as it was not until the sixth or seventh century that it is known to have become finally attached to the see of Rome. In the Greek church it was retained in its primitive use, as belonging to all members of the priesthood alike. At the same time, the entrance of Leo the Great into the bishopric marks more definitely than any other single event the beginning of the supremacy of the Roman church. The claim to the successorship of Peter, made by Roman bishops as early as the close of the second century, and favored more and more by the growing political power of the Roman see, found for the first time in Leo a worthy representative, who not only understood the idea of the Catholic church, but was determined to win for it practical recognition. The influence of his mere name at

[1] Evag. p. 328.

the Council of Chalcedon we have already seen. The importance which later tradition assigned to his career can be best understood from Raphael's well-known fresco of "Attila," in the "Stanza of the Heliodorus" in the Vatican. The picture is based on the following myth: When Attila crossed the Alps, in 452, and held Rome at his mercy, he was turned aside by the appearance of Leo, in his pontifical robes, who came forth to meet him, and over whose head appeared St. Peter and St. Paul, protecting their successor with a brandished sword.

Leo, as I have said, was not pope in the later sense of that word. He himself begins his letter to Flavian, on being summoned to the Council of Ephesus, simply, "Leo episcopus."[1] Indeed it is not easy to determine who first bore the title of pope, as acknowledged head of the Catholic church. The claim to primacy, which developed itself gradually in the minds of the Roman bishops, came quite as gradually to outward realization. The feeling which prevailed early in the fifth century can be inferred from Can. 17 of the General African Synod at Carthage,[2] which refers to the attempt of the Roman bishop to interfere in the proceedings of the African church regarding the Pelagian controversy: "Whoever appeals to a tribunal beyond the sea shall no longer be received into ecclesiastical communion by any one in Africa."[3] Later in the same century the supremacy of Rome over the Western church, so far as an emperor

[1] Hefele's Conciliengeschichte, ii. 353, n. [2] A. D. 418.
[3] Hefele, ii. 119.

could bestow it, was decreed by an edict of Valentinian III.,[1] declaring "the Romish bishop supreme head of the whole Western church;"[2] a decision which led the Oriental bishops at the Council of Chalcedon to declare the bishop of Constantinople on an equality with the bishop of Rome. Before the end of the fifth century, the term papa appears as applied to the Roman bishop Simplicius,[3] as it had been to Leo before, though the term was not yet in vogue, and though the Roman bishops demanded at that time only the honor belonging to all Apostolic sees.[4] According to a generally received belief, Boniface III., either in his own name or when nuncio of Gregory the Great, obtained a decree from the Emperor Phocas,[5] transferring the title of "universal bishop" from the patriarch of Constantinople, who had claimed it, to the bishop of Rome;[6] but the story rests on doubtful authority, and marks at best only a temporary surrender of the title by the patriarch of Constantinople. Nor did Gregory himself assume, in regard to other patriarchs, any tone of authority. Indeed, when the patriarch of Alexandria addressed him by this very title, papa universalis, Gregory disclaimed it, as a disparagement to his brethren in rank, and as fostering vanity. When the same patriarch used the expression "as you commanded," Gregory replied, "I know who I am and who you are, — in dignity and

[1] A. D. 445. [2] Gieseler's Church History, i. 395.
[3] "Beatissimi papæ nostri Simplicii."
[4] Gieseler, i. 499. [5] A. D. 606.
[6] "Ut sedes apostolica beati Pet. apos. caput esset omnium ecclesiarum."

rank you are my brother, in piety my father. I did not *command* you, I only endeavored to point out what seemed to me expedient."[1] He even goes so far as to declare that St. Peter himself never claimed to be a "universal apostle;" and asserts that the Apostolic see, though "the see of one only, is in three places," Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria. In his language to the Emperor Maurice, too, against whose decree concerning monasteries he violently protested, while feeling obliged to promulgate it, he shows how far the bishop of Rome was, in the seventh century, whatever his authority among other bishops, from claiming any superiority to the imperial power. "What am I," said Gregory the Great, "but dust and a worm, to speak thus to my Lord?"[2]

The pontificate of Gregory I., therefore, if such it can be called, showed both the slight pretensions of the papacy up to that time, and the steps it was then taking for larger authority. When Gregory assumed the episcopate, the Roman see was simply a metropolitan diocese, disputing precedence with three Eastern bishoprics, subject to the will of the Emperor, its supremacy not fully acknowledged even in France, England, Lower Italy, or Africa. By his organizing skill, and his genius as administrator, he gave the Western church a consciousness of unity which it had never felt before, and made the

[1] Quoted by Neander, Hist. iii. 115. See also Gregory's Epistles, viii. 30; Gieseler, i. 505, n.; Lau's Gregor I. pp. 149–166; Hallam's Middle Ages, ch. vii.

[2] Comp. Lau's Gregor I. p. 107; Ersch and Gruber, art. Greg. I.; Barmby's Gregory the Great, pp. 80, 99.

primacy of Rome in the West a necessity; while by making his influence felt throughout Italy in meeting the Lombard invasion, he taught the people to look to the Roman bishop as their natural protector, and so prepared the way for the political independence of the church.

The further stages in the growth of the papacy can be but briefly alluded to.

In 1054 came the excommunication by the pope of the patriarch of Constantinople;[1] from which time the Eastern Church, once identical with Christendom, became, as the Greek Church, a schismatic body; while its Western rival, having numbers and political power on its side, made good its claim as the head of Catholic Christianity.

The pontificate of Hildebrand (1073–85) was marked by the dramatic and significant spectacle of an emperor appearing as a suppliant at the gates of the pope, and waiting three winter days barefoot, before the haughty ecclesiastic would even receive his submission. From the time of Hildebrand the emancipation of the papacy from its vassalage to the empire was complete.

It would be useless in a discourse like this to attempt to trace in further detail the several steps by which the Catholic church advanced towards its present perfect development. Its doctrinal completion is wont to be found in the decrees of the Council of Trent, which was called in 1545–6, in response to the great Protestant movement of the sixteenth century, and which enunciated formally

[1] Nean. iii. 585.

and finally the dogmas of Catholicism. If any single moment is to be pointed out, however, when the Catholic church reached the fulness of its growth and realized its perfect ideal, it would certainly be that moment in the year 1870 when the General Council of the Vatican pronounced the pope of Rome the infallible head of the church. In this act, however illogical it may appear to the carnal mind for a pontiff to assume higher authority than the council which gave him his power, the structure became complete; without it, it would have remained forever unfinished. When the infallible word, intrusted to the hands of a divine hierarchy, is finally interpreted by one infallible mind, then and only then, perfect security against divided councils is gained, and the last step is taken in the progress of ecclesiastical Christianity.

And now, with this account of the Catholic church before us, the place which the subject takes in our present inquiries becomes sufficiently plain. The church came into being, as we have seen, in answer to the demand for a fixed and authoritative standard of doctrinal faith. If such a standard is essential to religious faith, such an institution as this must certainly exist to supply it. If we once grant this necessity, then we must acknowledge that the successive steps which the church took in its gradual development were natural and inevitable, and that the ideal of doctrinal unity and ecclesiastical authority could hardly be more legitimately or perfectly realized than in the Roman Catholic church of to-day. Every claim it has made, however arrogant, each position it has taken,

however unscrupulous, from the hour when each community made and unmade its bishops at will, to the moment when Pius IX. became the infallible head of an omnipotent hierarchy, has been simply an onward step toward the perfect vindication of its title to spiritual authority. However hostile to abstract justice or right many of these proceedings may have been, or however inconsistent with previous declarations of the church itself, it would be difficult to show that the church could have remained a church on any other terms. To accept the vote of a noisy council of angry bishops, acting under imperial dictation, as deciding the most solemn doctrines of Christian faith, to declare the administration of religious rites to be as holy if the priest be wicked as if he be virtuous, to bestow upon a human being the divine attribute of spiritual infallibility, although in the simple light of reason preposterous, yet one and all, as steps towards insuring uniformity of faith, have the argument wholly on their side. They are the very means whereby the Catholic church has so brilliantly redeemed its promises, and so triumphantly achieved for Christendom a perfect Orthodoxy. If the Christian world asks for outward authority, it is difficult to see what better it can demand than is here offered it. Tracing back its descent to Apostolic times, pointing to an unbroken career of eighteen centuries, and to a unity disturbed only by a slight departure from the faith in the fifth century, the schism of the Greek church in the eleventh century, and the Protestant schism in the sixteenth, the Catholic church, as an

ecclesiastical institution, has claims upon the recognition of Christendom which could not well be surpassed.

And of such churches there can be but one. If two are possible, if Christendom can have two ecclesiastical systems, then neither is supreme. Then doctrinal authority ceases. Two sources of authority are as impossible as twenty. If there is to be any outward authority in Christianity, it must be single. Christendom cannot have two churches; it can have but one, and that the one which can claim years and numbers on its side. If a church is necessary to Christianity, then the Roman church holds that place unchallenged.

Still another point is equally clear. If there is no room in Christendom for two churches, no more is there room for two authorized faiths. Doctrine is simply, as we have seen, the utterance of the church in matters of religious belief. Doctrines are church decisions. If there can be but one Christian church, so there can be but one Christian Orthodoxy. To suppose two, is to suppose none. The creed of the Roman church must remain the Orthodoxy of Christendom until there is another church to contest the place of the church of the Papacy.

I trust that you understand my exact position here. I do not say that the church of Rome is the legitimate outcome of Christianity; I say it is the legitimate outcome of *doctrinal* Christianity. I do not say it holds the only true faith; I say it holds the only faith for those who ask for a verbal creed. I do not say it has rightful authority over the soul; I say that over those who seek outward author-

ity, the Catholic church should be supreme. I do not say its logical position is invulnerable; I say its position is invulnerable if its premises are granted.

For one, I do not accept its premises. In my view, a religion is possible without outward authority, and without uniformity of faith. In my view, no true religion is possible with outward authority, or the acceptance of dogmas. As I view Christianity, Christianity was possible without ecclesiasticism, without a hierarchy, without a creed. As I view Christianity, the divine life to which it summoned the soul was not subscription to a verbal belief, but the pursuit of a truth which is infinite; not the solution of metaphysical subtleties, but the unfolding of spiritual aspirations. As I view Christian truth, the church which lay ideally in the great Founder's heart, was not a realm of authority where dominion is to be exercised over faith; it was the fellowship of souls in the pursuit of holiness and excellence, and the leadership of every pure and noble spirit which, with priestly robes or without, can help others to a nearer approach to heaven. As I view our religion, the moment the first priest was invested with authority over another's faith, the purity of Christianity was lost, and it could only fall further and further from its abandoned ideal. As I read the Gospels, every confession of a written dogma is treason to their religious simplicity; and as I read the life of Jesus, every such act is open infidelity to the spirituality of his thought. If Christendom as a whole stood upon this ground, all would be clear; but unfortunately it has chosen to demand a uniform belief, and must

therefore accept the consequences. In one religion there cannot be two churches, two hierarchies, two orthodoxies, — there can be but one.

I beg you to keep this point in view, for it is the central position of this course of lectures; it seems to me the central point of doctrinal Christianity. We have discovered Christian Orthodoxy. It is the creed of the Catholic church. Exactly that. If Christendom takes any further step, it must be in the career of heresy.

March 1, 1874.

VII.

THE LUTHERAN HERESY.

THE Catholic church, as we have seen, was the natural and necessary result of the demand, on the part of the Christian world, for a doctrinal faith. Although not hinted at in the Gospels themselves, although the gradual growth of many centuries, the church yet lay distinctly prefigured in the first effort to establish an outward uniformity of Christian belief; and the successive features which, from generation to generation, it assumed, were but the legitimate steps towards the fulfilment of this purpose. Yet its progress was never undisputed. Heresies lurked within its borders and threatened its peace, from the beginning, and were cast out only by the exercise of that supreme authority in matters of faith which the church claimed to have received from Christ, and which even heretics rarely questioned.

At last the time came, however, when this authority was itself challenged. The increasing pretensions of the papacy, together with the growing corruption of the priesthood, excited a deep distrust of the church, which in the sixteenth century ripened into a formidable revolt. It is

the story of this revolt, called the Protestant Reformation, that we are to follow to-night.

First, however, let us look for a moment at the lesser movements of the same kind which preceded the Reformation. Long before the sixteenth century the claims of the church had been called in question; not seriously enough to lead to an open rupture, yet enough to show that men's thoughts were turning in that direction. Nearly two centuries before the Protestant Reformation, at a time when England had become greatly agitated over the question of paying tribute to the pope, an English priest, John Wycliffe (born 1324), not only stoutly opposed the papal claim, but went so far as to style the pope "Antichrist;" "the proud, worldly Priest of Rome, the most cursed of Clippers and Purse-Kervers." Several bulls were issued against him, commanding inquiry into his erroneous doctrines, but the only result was fresh denunciations from Wycliffe of monasticism, confession, indulgences, worship of saints and images, and a denial of purgatory and the real-presence. Worse than this, Wycliffe turned his fine learning to account in translating the Scriptures for the first time into the popular tongue, and circulating them among the common people; thus helping to throw upon the pretensions of the papacy that one light which the papacy can never bear. Wycliffe's influence was chiefly felt, however, among scholars and men of letters, and his movement never reached popular dimensions. His doctrines were condemned by the pope in 1377, and at the so-called Earthquake Council in London, in 1382, but he

himself was allowed to continue in the discharge of parish duties, and died in 1384.[1]

Wycliffe's influence, however, did not cease with his death, nor was it confined to his own land. Early in the next century, John Huss,[2] a preacher in Prague, stirred by Wycliffe's writings, began to preach against the worldliness of the clergy and the abuses of the papacy, claimed rights for the congregation as well as the priests, insisted upon administering the cup at the sacrament, and denied that any visible head was needful to the church. Anticipating the heresy of a later day, when the pope offered indulgences for sale to pay the expenses of a crusade, Huss openly preached against them, and burned the pope's bull at the public pillory. These open acts of rebellion were dealt with in a summary way. At the Council of Constance, in 1415, Huss was declared "obstinately guilty of heresy," was "degraded from his priesthood, and handed over to the secular power." "He was now clothed in sacerdotal vestments," says the Catholic historian, St. Liguori,[3] "which were immediately afterwards stripped off him, and a paper cap was put on his head, inscribed, 'Behold the heresiarch.' He was now tied to the stake, and as the executioner applied the torch, the hypocrite was heard to exclaim, 'Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me;' words inspired by the vainglorious desire of being considered to have died a

[1] Hase, p. 346.

[2] Born in 1373.

[3] Liguori's Hist. of Heresies, p. 254; Seebohm's Era of Prot. Revolution, p. 14.

martyr's death; but we should not forget that the devil has martyrs, and infuses into them a false constancy. His ashes were cast into the lake, and thus the scene closed upon John Huss."[1] His confederate, the scholarly and chivalric Jerome of Prague, met the same fate the following year.

By its dealings with these two offenders the church showed by what means its authority was to be enforced. If the means seem cruel, we must remember the necessities of the church. If uniformity of belief is to be secured, it can only be, in any age, by the violent suppression of every heresy. The fifteenth century was more consistent than the nineteenth.

A reformer of quite another stamp appeared still later in the same century in Florence, and was the instigator of one of the most picturesque as well as impassioned religious revolutions which Christendom has known. In the midst of the classic revival in Italy, when Florence was at the height of her luxury and splendor, and the Medici had gathered about them the brilliant company of artists that graced the close of the fifteenth century, a Dominican monk, Jerome Savonarola, began a crusade against the religious abuses and social corruptions which were tainting both church and people. The effect of his fierce Italian eloquence is described as unparalleled. The courtly city was struck dumb with shame, and paralyzed with fear. "Women rose up suddenly," we are told, "laid aside their splendid garments, and appeared again in modest

[1] See also Hase, 347 – 349.

attire; enemies became reconciled; illegal gains were voluntarily given back. It even happened that a young and happy married pair separated and went both into the cloister."[1]

At the carnival of 1496 a pyramid sixty feet high was erected on the piazza, formed of harps, lutes, playing-cards, dice and gaming-tables, chess-boards of artistic form, women's head-dresses, false hair and costly shawls, rouge-pots, essences, and books with love-songs, to which the crowd set fire, dancing around it while it burned.[2] Even artists were seized by the strange frenzy. Fra Bartolomeo threw his choicest paintings upon the burning pile, and went into a convent.[3] Lorenzo de Credi cast in his drawings and paintings from the nude. Sandro Botticelli was affected by religious melancholy, if the accounts be true, and abandoned his art.[4] According to one theory Perugino, who just at this time lost the fine inspiration of his earlier art, and sunk into a lifeless mannerism, and died a sceptic, felt this cold blight upon his genius and his faith when his great religious leader perished at the stake.[5] Even Michael Angelo has been counted among Savonarola's adherents.[6] For a few years the power of Savonarola in Florence, both civil and religious, seemed boundless;

[1] Grimm's Life of M. Angelo, i. 118.

[2] Vasari's Life of Fra Bartolomeo; Trollope's Commonwealth of Florence, iv. 131; Grimm, i. 156.

[3] Grimm. i. 357.

[4] Pater's Studies of the Renaissance, p. 40.

[5] Taine's Italy; Lecky's Rationalism in Europe, i. 260.

[6] Grimm, i. 157.

when suddenly, as some of his political predictions failed of fulfilment, the fickle populace, joining hands with the rulers of the city against their idol, brought him to the stake. He was burned, in 1498, in front of the Government palace. The church has never ranked this impetuous preacher among its heretics. Raphael introduced him into the Vatican among the doctors of the church, in his fresco of the Dispute of the Sacrament. His portrait, painted by Bartolomeo, encircled with the halo of sanctity, was offered for sale even in the streets of Rome,[1] and hangs in the gallery of St. Mark to the present day.

Such were some of the precursors of the reformers of the sixteenth century. The fact that Huss and Savonarola were silenced only made it the more imperative that some one should speak. The power which the Roman church places in the hands of its higher clergy cannot be safely borne unless those who hold it are something more than human. That the popes and bishops of the fifteenth century were not more than human, is best shown, perhaps, by the following passages from Catholic writers.

"The scenes of disorder," writes the Abbé Darras, "had necessarily produced a deplorable relaxation in the morals of the clergy. Intrigue, simony, corruption, and venality were rending the bosom of the church. The private life of the clergy presented a sad spectacle; the spirit of the world, sensuality, and avarice reigned supreme in their hearts. Relaxation of discipline had reached such

[1] Grimm, i. 220.

a pitch that some doctors did not blush to maintain that marriage should be made lawful for the clergy; they thought they could best meet the scandal by making it legitimate."[1] Döllinger, who at the time of writing his history of the church was a good Catholic in high repute, gives the following account of the four popes who immediately preceded Leo X.; whose pontificates therefore prepared the way for the Reformation. "After the death of Paul II., in 1471, began days of woe and scandal for the see of Rome. Men were now raised to the highest ecclesiastical dignities whom the primitive church would not have admitted to the lowest ranks of the clergy."[2] "Sixtus IV. raised at once two of his nephews to the rank of cardinals. One was loaded with benefices, bishoprics, and abbeys in Italy, France, and Spain; was governor of several provinces, legatee of all Italy, and surrounded himself with a court of five hundred persons. The other was created cardinal at seventeen, and had sixteen bishops in his suite. For still another, a principality in Romagna was designed."[3] Innocent VIII., "who gained the vote of the cardinals by promises of legations and rich benefices," and was well known to have a large family of sons and daughters, enriched himself as follows: "To fill the papal treasury, fifty-two officers were appointed for expediting bulls, each paying twenty-five hundred ducats for the office."[4] Of Alexander VI., the next pope, father of

[1] Darras's Hist. of Church, i. 644.
[2] Döllinger's Hist. of Church, iv. 219.
[3] Id. iv. 220. [4] Id. iv. 225.

the notorious Cæsar and Lucretia Borgia, he says: "That which might well seem incredible now came to pass. A man of whose immoral and vicious life no one could have been ignorant, was raised to the highest dignity of the church, only because he had by boundless avarice collected sufficient money to purchase the votes of fifteen out of the twenty cardinals."[1] Of the next pope he says, "The warlike and conquest-seeking Julius II. directed his efforts to restoring the strength of the church,"[2] and so had little time for purging it of its corruptions. Finally, of Leo X., himself, Döllinger writes: "Least of all could a pontiff like the splendor-loving and magnificent Leo interrupt the promiscuous and odious traffic of the tribunal." "Bishops contended with cardinals for exorbitant privileges."[3]

Let me add to these a few words in relation to the same period from the historian Ranke: "The only concern of the Roman Curia was to engross to itself the greatest possible number of vacancies and appointments."[4] "The ordinances of the Roman Catholic church and texts from Scripture were spoken of with a sneer; the mysteries of faith were treated with contempt." "One no longer passes for an accomplished person in Rome," were the words of a visitor of those days, "who does not entertain wrong views of Christianity."[5]

Such was the state of things in Rome, when in the

[1] Döllinger's Hist. of Church, iv. 225.
[2] Id. iv. 229.
[3] Id. iv. 237.
[4] Ranke's Hist. of Papacy, i. 52.
[5] Id. i. 64.

year 1510 an Augustinian pilgrim from Prussian Saxony wandered through the streets of the eternal city. Had he been a lover of art, his thoughts would perhaps have turned to other things than those which vexed his passionate soul, and he might have judged the scenes around him in a different spirit; for in the splendid palace of Julius II., Michael Angelo was sketching on the ceiling of the Sistine chapel prophets and sibyls of almost superhuman majesty; while in neighboring halls, Raphael, born the same year with our German monk, was illustrating in a vast series of triumphant designs the expulsion of the royal French invader from the sacred soil of Italy, the miraculous victory of the papacy over its sacrilegious foes, the eternal supremacy of the church over the pagan world. Little heed, however, did the young friar pay to vanities like these. Still less to the marble gods and goddesses which a new-born classic zeal was daily bringing to the light of day from beneath the soil of Rome. What lay upon his troubled heart was the condition of the clergy of his church. How they talked of sacred things! bought and sold the offices of Christ! smiled at the mass, and hurried from the confessional to their beastly debaucheries! Little will it take, when he returns to his chair at Wittenberg, to fan the coals of his indignation to a consuming flame. This German pilgrim was Martin Luther, then twenty-seven years old, already a preacher of repute and lecturer upon the Holy Scriptures at the Saxon university at Wittenberg, of whom, before he went to Rome, a rector of his university had ventured the prediction:

"This monk will put all doctors to the rout; he builds upon the word of Christ." [1]

The needed provocation came within a few years after his return from Rome. Leo X., who had succeeded Julius II., and needed funds to carry out his predecessor's gigantic plans for the reconstruction of the Basilica of St. Peter, proposed to obtain them, as other popes had done before him, by the offer of indulgences through all Catholic lands. The granting of indulgences, based on the power of the church to remit sins, long claimed by the popes, and recently, under Alexander VI., extended to the rescue of souls out of purgatory,[2] rested upon the idea that the merits of Christ and the Virgin were so far in excess of the needs of the human race, that the superabundance might be turned to account, at the discretion of popes and bishops, for the remission of the temporal punishment of sins. "The treasure of indulgences," says the Abbé Darras, "which can be dispensed only by popes and bishops, is supplied from the superabundant satisfaction of Jesus Christ; a single drop of the blood of the God-man would have been a thousand times sufficient to redeem thousands of worlds. To these exhaustless springs of merit are added the abounding merits of Mary, who never had a fault to expiate, with those of numberless saints who have suffered for justice's sake, and practised long-continued penance to atone for slight imperfections." [3]

[1] D'Aubigné's Hist. of Reform. of Sixteenth Cent. i. 160.
[2] Ranke, i. 54.
[3] Darras's Hist. of Church, ii. 46.

With this exhaustless fountain to draw from, and so holy an enterprise to further as the building of St. Peter's, it would be strange indeed if Leo left any of his subjects' sins unremitted, where there was money to purchase exemption from punishment. Half the profits in every Catholic land the pope claimed as his own.[1] The dealer of these indulgences in Germany, the Dominican Tetzel, passed through the country in 1516 in a gay carriage, escorted by three horsemen, with the papal bull on a velvet cushion before him, and as he drew near each town or village the populace came forth in eager crowds to meet him. Entering a church at once and mounting the pulpit, he shouted in a sonorous voice: "Ye priests, ye nobles, ye tradesmen, ye wives, ye maidens, and ye young men, hearken to your departed parents and friends who cry to you from the bottomless abyss: 'We are enduring horrible torment! a small alms would deliver us; you can give it, and you will not!'" "The very moment that the money clinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory and flies free to heaven."[2]

A less impetuous soul than Martin Luther's might have been stirred by such scenes and words as these; and we are not surprised to find him indignantly denouncing the whole system to his bishop, as a "scandalous traffic," and, in a sermon to a crowded assembly, declaring that "indulgences, instead of expiating, leave the Christian in the filth of his sins. Give first to your needy brother," he told

[1] Hase, p. 363.
[2] D'Aubigné's Reformation, i. 209, 212.

his hearers, "and then if you have means bestow them on the Basilica of St. Peter."[1]

The crowds who had collected to hear Luther's sermon went away profoundly moved; yet the sale of indulgences continued, and Luther was not one to take any backward step. About a month later, on All Saints' Day, October 31, 1517, as multitudes of German pilgrims were pouring into the Catholic church of Wittenberg to gaze upon the relics which the Elector had placed there, and thereby receive plenary indulgence, their attention was arrested by a paper nailed upon the gate, containing ninety-five distinct propositions against the doctrine of indulgences. Pious pilgrims shuddered as they read such blasphemies as these: —

1. "When our Master and Lord Jesus Christ says 'Repent,' he means that the whole life of his faithful servants upon earth should be a constant and continual repentance.

2. "This cannot be understood of the sacrament of penance as administered by the priest."

6. "The pope cannot remit any condemnation: but can only declare and confirm the remission that God himself has given."

8. "The laws of ecclesiastical penance can only be imposed on the living, and in no wise respect the dead."

25. "The same power which the pope has over purgatory, in the church at large, is possessed by every bishop in his diocese, and every curate in his parish."

[1] Darras, ii. 47, 48.

27. "Those persons preach human inventions who pretend that, at the very moment when the money sounds in the strong box, the soul escapes from purgatory.

28. "This is certain; that, as soon as the money sounds, avarice and the love of gain come in, grow, and multiply."

32. "Those who fancy themselves sure of their salvation by indulgences will go to the devil with those who teach them this doctrine."

36. "Every Christian who feels true repentance for his sins has perfect remission from the punishment and from the sin, without the need of indulgences."[1]

The Protestant Reformation had begun. In those daring words, the great heresy which had been trembling on men's lips for years was spoken, and the ninety-five theses became at once the rallying cry for a new faith. If man's sins could really be remitted through his own repentance simply, without the intervention of the church, if faith alone could accomplish his salvation, with no aid from the works of penance or confession, if priest and curate had the same power over sins as pope or bishop, the question must follow at once: What need of pope or church? And that question was Protestantism.

The posting of these theses was Luther's own act; done, as he assures us, without consultation even with his most intimate friends. What the response to it would be, he did not know. No more does he seem to have been

[1] D'Aubigné, i. 239–242.

aware of the ultimate bearings of the truth he had so indignantly uttered; for he believed in all sincerity that the credit of the pope was compromised by the traffic in indulgences, and that pope and church would sustain him against the monks and make his cause their own.[1] "I entered on this controversy," he said at a later day, "without any settled purpose or inclination, and entirely unprepared. I call God to witness this who sees the heart."[2] "Instead of being abused and condemned, I expected to be warmly encouraged and commended." The effect, however, was instantaneous. Luther's theses spread like wild-fire. "In the space of a fortnight," says the contemporary historian Myconius, quoted by D'Aubigné, "they had spread over Germany, and within a month they had run through all Christendom as if angels themselves had been the bearers of them to all men." "They were afterwards," says D'Aubigné, "translated into Dutch and into Spanish, and a traveller carried them for sale as far as Jerusalem." "Before a month had elapsed, they had found their way to Rome."[3] The students at Wittenberg, after the wont of students, received the rebellious document with shouts of applause, and burned Tetzel's answer to it in the public square.[4] Others besides young students hailed this act with joy. Reuchlin and Erasmus, great theologians of the day, applauded Luther's courage; the prior of Steinlausitz, and bishop of Würzburg, publicly expressed their delight; even the emperor

[1] D'Aubigné, i. 238.
[2] Id. p. 245.
[3] Id. i. 248.
[4] Darras, ii. 49.

Maximilian read the theses, understood their aim, and admired their power; the Elector of Saxony, Frederic the Wise, though cautious and anxious at first, soon became Luther's chief supporter and protector; Albert Dürer, first of German painters, sent him a gift in recognition of his services to the church; while Leo contented himself with saying, "It is a drunken German who has written these lines; when he is sober he will talk very differently."[1]

Luther clung long to the idea that his doctrines were no attack upon the pope or church. As late as 1520 he wrote to Leo a letter full of personal regard, addressing him as the "Most Holy Father in God," and saying, "I have never ceased by prayers and sighs to pray God for your prosperity and that of your pontificate."[2] But the result was inevitable. At the very time when Luther was thus addressing the pope, the bull of excommunication, once so fearful a weapon, was in the hands of the papal nuncio, and was soon known throughout rebellious Germany.[3] On June 16, 1520, the bull was issued; condemning forty-one propositions taken from Luther's writings, ordering his works to be burned, and pronouncing excommunication upon their author unless he recanted within sixty days.[4] Luther responded to this, December 10, 1520, by leading a procession of students out of the city, and throwing the bull, with the book of the canon law, into the flames.[5] At Erfurth, the students, with

[1] D'Aub. i. 250–257. [2] Id. ii. 117.
[3] Id. 122. [4] Hase, 369. [5] Id. 370.

greater levity, tore copies of the bull in pieces, and threw them into the river, with the profane pun, "Since it is a bubble [bulla] let us see it float."[1]

One further step in the condemnation of this dangerous heresy remained. In 1521, the Imperial Diet was to assemble at Worms, where the young emperor, Charles V., was to meet, for the first time, his German subjects. The Diet was called upon to confirm the papal edict by placing Luther under the ban of the empire; and Luther was summoned to appear in person. A safe-conduct from the emperor was given him, as a surety against violence; but Luther could not forget that just a century before, Huss, under similar charges, and with a similar safe-conduct, had gone to imprisonment and death. The anxiety of Luther's friends was great, therefore, and they expostulated earnestly with him against venturing upon such sure destruction. Luther does not seem to have faltered. "Were there as many devils in Worms as there are roof-tiles," he said, with characteristic vigor of speech, "I would go on." The streets of Worms were thronged as he passed through on his way to the Hall of the Diet, and the solemn words greeted him from the house-tops, as though it were clear that he must either recant or die, "Whosoever denieth me before men!"[2] Their fears were vain. Luther stood firm. "Until convinced by Holy Scriptures," he said as he closed his defence before Emperor, Elector, and Diet, "I can and will retract nothing; for it is neither safe nor expedient to

[1] D'Aub. ii. 125. [2] Carlyle's Heroes, p. 167.

act against conscience. Here I stand; I can do nothing else; God help me! Amen!"[1] In a letter to Lucas Cranach, written on the way back from Worms, Luther himself describes the event in a somewhat less heroic vein than that in which history is wont to record it. "I thought his imperial Majesty would have assembled a doctor, or perhaps fifty, to refute the monk in fair discussion; but nothing more was done than this, — 'Are these books thine?' 'Yes!' 'Wilt thou retract them or not?' No!' 'Then begone.'"[2] Through the personal influence of the Elector, who had himself declined the imperial crown, and had contributed greatly to the election of Charles, Luther's safe-conduct was sacredly observed, and although he was formally condemned by the Diet, yet his defence won the hearts of many who pronounced his sentence.[3]

As at this point the Lutheran schism was virtually complete, and as the further progress of the movement has been often told, let us stop here to ask what was the theological significance of the movement. In what did its departure from Catholicism consist?

The ground which Luther took at the beginning, as we have seen, in attacking indulgences, was simply that sins are remitted, not by popes or bishops, in the discharge of certain obligations, but freely and graciously upon repentance and faith. In this position, as Luther

[1] Hase, p. 371.
[2] Luther's Briefe (De Wette), i. p. 588.
[3] Hase, 370, 372.

afterwards saw, lay the great doctrine of Justification by Faith not Works, which became the doctrinal basis of Protestantism. To this he attributed the success of his reform. "It is doctrine that we attack in the followers of the papacy," said he; "Huss and Wyckliffe only attacked their life; but in attacking their doctrine we seize the goose by the throat. I have overcome the pope because my doctrine is according to God, and his is the doctrine of the devil." [1] That he had really overcome the pope, Luther did not question. Here is another assertion of the fact, which I give for its style. "The world is a vast and grand game of cards, made up of emperors, kings, and princes. The pope for several centuries has beaten emperors, princes, and kings. They have been put down and taken up by him. Then came our Lord God; he dealt the cards; he took the most worthless of them all, and with it he has beaten the pope, the conqueror of the kings of the earth. . . . There is the ace of God." [2]

But however plainly the reformers afterwards saw in their movement the downfall of the pope, and the doctrine of Justification by Faith, they did not see these things at first, but reached them only by successive steps. In a dispute with Dr. Eck, Chancellor of the University of Ingolstadt, held in the palace of Duke George at Leipsic, in 1519, Luther found himself engaged in a twelve days' controversy upon the primacy of the pope, and denying, for the first time, on grounds of Scripture

[1] D'Aubigné, i. 243. [2] Id., Preface, vii.

and history, that the pope was the one vicar of Christ, or the universal bishop of the church. It was in this same controversy that the young Philip Melanchthon first appeared, whose great learning, and thoroughly trained mind, determined from that hour, quite as much as did Luther's profounder convictions, the form of Protestant theology.[1]

In 1520, in his "Address to the Christian Nobles," of which four thousand copies circulated between June and September, and which may be considered his declaration of war against the papacy, Luther took the ground that the strength of Romanism lay in its appeal to the spiritual as above secular power, and so was led to the doctrine that all Christians alike belong to the spiritual order.[2] Beginning by declaring bishops and priests equal to popes, he thus ended by proclaiming every true Christian equal to the head of the church. This address was followed immediately by his tract called the "Babylonish Captivity of the Church," in which he took the still stronger ground that the papacy was not a human, but a devilish institution, claimed, like Huss before him, that the cup should be administered to the laity, and rejected all sacraments but baptism, penance, and the Lord's Supper.[3]

Thus far Luther had had little to do but attack certain falsehoods and corruptions of the papacy, and assert spiritual freedom. How far he was actually ready to go in the doctrine of freedom, was a question which he was

[1] D'Aubigné, ii. 30–56. [2] Hase, 368.
[3] Luther's Sämtliche Schriften, 1750, vol. xix.; Hase, 369.

forced abruptly to answer in 1524, by a dangerous revolt of the German peasants, who made his doctrines their pretext for rebelling against both secular and spiritual nobility, and claiming community of goods and universal equality. In response to this, Luther issued at once a fiery address to the Princes of Saxony, urging the principle of absolute obedience, and even advising the princes to slaughter the peasants like so many mad dogs. "Kill them," he writes, "as the Jews were ordered to kill the Amorites and Canaanites," — a too legitimate example which was most faithfully followed.[1] With contingencies like these to meet, Luther was not slow in concluding that not only must the Catholic church be overthrown, but another must be ready to take its place.[2]

It was not until this same year, four years after his excommunication, seven years after his first act of rebellion, that Luther laid aside his friar's frock; having clung till then to his monastic habit with the same lingering affection with which he held to the papacy long after the principles of the papacy had been finally abandoned. One year later, another event occurred which, in the eyes of the church, stamped the heretic and his heresy with far deeper infamy than all that had preceded it, and showed that no retreat was contemplated. In June, 1525, the former Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, was married to the former Cistercian nun, Catharine von Bora.

In 1529, at the second Diet of Speyer, on occasion of

[1] Eyn brieff an die Fürst. z. Sachsen, v. d. auffrurischen geyst. Wittenberg, 1524.

[2] Hase, p. 378.

a protest offered by several of the princes engaged in the reform, the party received the name of Protestants.[1] In 1530, at the Diet of Augsburg, summoned by Charles V., after his peace with France and Rome, for the purpose of healing the division in his German church, a statement of faith, known as the Confession of Augsburg, was drawn up, at his request, in behalf of the protesting states, by Melanchthon. This Confession, which is interesting to us as the first official announcement of Protestant doctrine, was agreed upon only after a three months' debate, in which not merely the points of controversy between Protestant and Catholic, but also those at issue among the Protestants themselves, had to be brought into satisfactory form. Melanchthon found his task no easy one, and succeeded, as peacemakers commonly do, only in winning for himself the renewed hostility of his opponents, and the life-long suspicion and resentment of many of his fellow-reformers. The Confession, which was presented to the Emperor both in Latin and in German, begins with an affirmation of the Trinity, as based upon the symbol of Nicæa, together with a condemnation of the Manichæan and Arian heresies, and is divided into two parts: the first, in twenty-one articles, showing the faith and doctrine of the new church; the second, in seven articles, showing the abuses in the ancient worship which Protestantism aimed to correct. It is noticeable that nothing is said of the divine right of popes, the number of the sacraments, or the authority of Scripture. The mass,

[1] Hase, p. 381.

confession, private absolution, and the "power of the keys" are reaffirmed; the real presence of Christ in the bread or wine is asserted (in the Latin version at least) as positively as any Romanist could desire; and the sacraments and the Word are declared "effectual, though they be delivered by evil men." It is also claimed, in the Latin version, that "the churches among us dissent in no article of faith from the Catholic church." The main points insisted upon are: the doctrine of Justification by Faith, the administering of the sacrament in both kinds, and the right of priests to marry; while the worship of saints, monastic vows, the ensnaring of conscience by useless tradition, and the compulsory observance of the Lord's Day, or other church holidays, are denounced as abuses.[1]

This Confession was by no means accepted by the reformers themselves as a complete utterance of their faith. Even during the same session of the Diet, it was supplemented by Melanchthon's Apology; and afterwards, in 1537, by the "Articles of Smalkald," drawn up by Luther himself; to which again Luther's Lesser and Greater Catechism must afterwards be added, before the creed of the Lutheran Church could be considered complete.[2] The first symbol of Protestantism, therefore, consists of a Confession, an Apology, Articles, a Lesser and a Greater Catechism; a striking proof of the difficulty

[1] "Die symbolischen Bücher der Evang.-luther-Kirche," Müller, 1848. Comp. Schaff's "Creeds of Christendom," vol. iii.; D'Aubigné, iv. 186–197.

[2] Schaff's Creeds of Christendom, iii.; Hase, 383, 390.

which Protestantism encountered the moment it abandoned the simple work of reform and attempted to find for itself a doctrinal basis.

Let it not be supposed, however, that even these statements were easily agreed upon, or betokened a perfect accord on the part of that one fraction of the Protestant church which called itself distinctively Lutheran. To understand perfectly the history of the times, it is important to notice some of the divisions within the Lutheran church which these voluminous confessions hardly succeeded in removing or concealing.

Not even the fundamental doctrine of Justification by Faith passed unchallenged or was accepted without a struggle. Luther himself took extreme ground. "Faith alone saves," he said; "human acts have no merit; good works, on which alone the church relies in its penances and confessions, are useless." "No," answered Melanchthon, "not useless; good works may be necessary, though not meritorious. Indeed the will of man must conspire with the grace of God." "No," said Luther, "God's will is omnipotent; man's disappears. God predestines all to happiness or misery." These quotations represent an actual controversy between these two friends; from which arose on Luther's side an Augustinianism more Augustinian than that of the Catholic church. His immediate followers went so far as to claim that "good works are pernicious to salvation," and branded the followers of Melanchthon with the opprobrious title of *Synergists*. To be called "Synergist" was of course more than

Protestant patience could endure; and the little German church was for many years rent by a furious strife, in which university was pitted against university, Wittenberg against the more Orthodox Jena, and in which the fierce alternations of victory and defeat recalled vividly those hours of early Christendom when Arians and Athanasians succeeded each other so swiftly that it was hard to tell to which the Christian empire really belonged. For a time Synergism seemed doomed to defeat; and the Synergist, Strigelius, was thrown into prison; but finally it recovered its power, and the Anti-Synergists were in 1561 banished from the country.[1]

But the bitterest controversy which the young church knew, and perhaps the bitterest which Christendom has ever known, was that which arose over the Lord's Supper. Luther, while surrendering the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, as carrying with it the supernatural power of the priesthood, yet insisted upon the actual presence of Christ's body in the elements; to designate which he adopted the convenient term consubstantiation. When Christ says, "This is my body," argued Luther, he meant it. The bread, it is true, does not become his body at the word of the priest; yet none the less is Christ's body literally there, and literally eaten by the believer. Melanchthon, on the other hand, like Calvin, leaned to a spiritual interpretation of the words of Jesus; but insisted that neither Luther's interpretation nor Calvin's was essential to true communion. Once more, a warm con-

[1] Herzog's Real-Encyklopädie, xv.; Hase, 406.

troversy between the two leaders, and a still warmer strife between their followers, the extent of which may be conjectured from the fact that Melanchthon was considered far too yielding, because he was willing even to maintain fellowship with the Swiss when they interpreted Christ's language in a figurative sense. Luther, on the contrary, angrily refused all overtures, and when Zwingli offered his hand in token of reconciliation, openly rejected it. His followers remained true to this spirit after his death. When the noble Polish refugee, John of Laski, was driven from England, with his entire congregation, for his denial of the real presence, he could find no asylum in Lutheran Germany, but was treated as a robber, poisoner, and martyr of the devil. The followers of Melanchthon were obliged to receive a heretical title once more, and under the name of Philippists were hunted down and at last imprisoned or banished from the land. In 1573, when they were finally exterminated, a medal was struck in commemoration of this "triumph of Christ over human reason and the devil."[1]

So hard was the path which the new religion had to tread in reaching its doctrinal expression and doctrinal unity. Indeed, years after its "Confession of Augsburg," years after its "Articles of Smalkald," each of which was accepted at the time as the final statement of its faith, so many and bitter were still the controversies within the Lutheran church, respecting the fundamental principles of Protestantism, that it was found necessary, in 1577, as

[1] Hase, 389, 404, 407.

the last endeavor to secure doctrinal harmony, to draw up what was called a "Form of Concord," in which all disputed points were handled as delicately as possible, and which, instead of being exposed to the hazards of a general synod, was offered for final acceptance to the imperial Diet, whose scent for heresy, it was supposed, would not be quite so keen as that of professed theologians.[1]

Severe as were its own doctrinal strifes, however, the young church could by no means deny itself the luxury of heretics or of persecutions. The following imperfect list will show that in this respect Lutheranism did not feel the loss of popes or councils, and could treat a dissenter as loftily as though it had a creed and tribunal of its own. In 1566, certain doctrines concerning Justification, which were hostile to Luther's, were pronounced heretical, and Funck, the main advocate of these doctrines, was executed.[2] In 1560, as we have already seen, Synergism was declared heresy, and Strigelius imprisoned; in 1573, during the sacramentarian controversy, Wigand and Hesshusius were expelled from their professorships at Jena, and from the country;[3] in 1602, as final fruits of the same strife, Nicholas Crell, Chancellor of the Palatinate, after ten years' imprisonment, was beheaded;[4] in 1631, Kepler, who was a devout Lutheran, yet who found in Protestantism no kindlier a home for scientific thought than Galileo had found in Romanism, "was driven from the Lord's

[1] Hase, 410; Hagenbach's Hist. of Doc. ii. 146.
[2] Hase, p. 404. [3] Id. p. 408. [4] Id. p. 411.

fold as an unsound sheep," because he doubted whether the Lord's body was truly omnipresent.[1]

Such, in very brief outline, was the great religious movement of the sixteenth century, which we are accustomed to call the Reformation, which the Catholic church styles the Lutheran Heresy. Which name is right? In the title to this discourse, as you have noticed, I have chosen the latter; and I have done this out of simple regard for historic truth. If there is any such thing as heresy in the Christian church, if Arianism or Pelagianism is heresy, then Lutheranism is certainly heresy. So far as Protestantism is content to be merely a protest in behalf of pure Christianity against the corruptions and tyrannies of the papacy, it has claim to the title of a Reformation; the moment it assumes a system of doctrinal faith, and raises a theological standard of its own, it must step into the ranks of heresy. The point is a simple one. Scripture having in itself no doctrines, and all Christian doctrines being, therefore, the creation of the church, to forsake the church is to forsake the doctrines, and forsake the only authority on which doctrines are based; so that the only alternative of Catholicism is heresy.

Let us see how the case stands. Up to a certain point Protestantism accepts the decrees of the church. Lutheranism, as we have seen, bases its belief in the Trinity entirely on the Symbol of Nicæa, as indeed it could not rest it elsewhere. It appends to its own confession what

[1] Hase, p. 411.

it calls the three General Symbols of the church, the Apostolic, the Nicæan, the Athanasian. But the decrees of the Council of Trent concerning Lutheranism are just as binding as those of Nicæa concerning Arianism. What sanction has the article which condemns the faith of Arius, that does not belong to the articles which condemn the belief of Luther? Do you say it was the universal church that condemned Arius? But it was the same church, acting under precisely the same forms, which condemned Luther. Do you say it was the General Councils of Nicæa, of Ephesus, of Chalcedon, which condemned the ancient doctrines? So it was the General Council of Trent which condemned these later doctrines. Do you say it was only a vote of a majority which made Trent Catholic and Augsburg heresy? So it was only the vote of a majority at Nicæa which made Athanasius and the Trinity orthodoxy, Arius and Arianism heresy. Do you say it was mere papal tyranny which carried the decision of Trent? So it was mere imperial tyranny which carried the decisions of Nicæa and Chalcedon. Do you say papal supremacy is no part of the gospel, whatever councils may say, and, therefore, no essential part of Christianity? Neither is "three persons in one," or "two natures in one person" part of the Gospel, whatever councils may say, and is, therefore, no essential part of Christianity. Do you say the Christian believer has an indefeasible right to accept or reject the purely human decrees of Trent? So has the Christian believer an indefeasible right to accept or reject the purely human decrees of Nicæa. Do you say

the Catholic church was corrupt in the sixteenth century, and needed change and renewal? But was not the Catholic church corrupt in the fourth century, when three hundred and eighteen bishops accepted their theology at the hands of a despotic emperor fresh from Paganism? or in the fifth century, when armed monks drove dissenting bishops under tables until they signed the decrees of the Council, and one archbishop kicked another archbishop to death?

These arguments are all either sound or unsound. If unsound, Lutheranism is of course wrong; if sound, then Lutheranism with Arianism and Nestorianism and Pelagianism is right. Every reason which justifies the orthodox Protestant in denying Trent and the Papacy, justifies you and me in denying Nicæa and the Deity of Christ, Constantinople and the Holy Spirit, Chalcedon and the Incarnation, the Athanasian Creed and the Trinity. Every argument which would make you or me accept Nicæa and the Trinity, would make the orthodox Protestant accept Trent and the Papacy and Penance and the Mass.

Luther was right, I agree; but in being right he justified the deniers of all the doctrines which issued from preceding councils; that is, all the doctrines of orthodoxy. Luther was right, I agree; but in being right, he has destroyed, so far as his doctrines prevail, not the papacy alone, but papacy and orthodoxy both. I trust this point will be understood; exactly what this arch-heretic overthrew. He overthrew orthodoxy; *i. e.*, outward uni-

formity of faith; authoritative dogma. I trust it will be understood exactly what he so heroically, however unintentionally, established. He established absolute independence of individual belief, as against pope and council, and church and creed. His movement was a glorious triumph so long as it was a movement for freedom from ecclesiastical rule; it was a conspicuous failure, the moment it tried to establish an ecclesiastical authority of its own, for which it had left itself no basis.

The history of Protestantism and its present condition amply bear out this statement. We often hear of a Protestant Church; but where is there such a thing? I for one have never seen it. Churches are not a church, any more than families are a state, or regiments an army, or drops of water a lake, or bits of plank a ship. No Protestant Church exists, or ever has existed. A hundred warring sects, each with heart full of jealousies and fears, each selfishly intent upon its own enlargement, each changing its faith with every year, do not constitute a church, nor offer the material out of which a church can be formed. Men speak, too, of Protestant Orthodoxy; but if it exists, where is it to be found? Who confesses it? What council has framed it? What church subscribes to it? What Evangelical Alliance has adopted it? Who can point me to a single article of its creed? Who can show me authority for a single Protestant doctrine?

In a word, Catholicism and Orthodoxy are synonymous terms; against which are to be set Protestantism and Heresy. All Protestants are heretics alike; and once

being heretics the varying shades of their heresy are of slight account. Protestantism, in our eyes, was a triumph of pure Christianity. Yet the triumph lay, not in establishing a new church and new doctrines against the old, but in emancipating the soul from all ecclesiastical fetters, and bidding it reassume its spiritual freedom.

March 15, 1874.

VIII.

OTHER TRINITARIAN HERESIES.

I HAVE spoken thus far of the Protestant Reformation only in its connection with Martin Luther. But this of course is not the whole of Protestantism. Luther's schism, in renouncing the source of all doctrinal authority, made other schisms possible and inevitable. This fact appeared at the outset. Not only is there, as we have shown, no Protestant church or Protestant orthodoxy to-day; there never has been either the one or the other. The worst prophecies of Luther's foes, on this point, were fully verified. Protestantism fell asunder at the first touch, and has crumbled year by year into an increasing mass of fragments. Its history is, and must always be, the history of countless sects.

As it does not lie within the scope of the present course of lectures to take up all these fragments of heretical Christianity, I propose to limit myself to such as will best illustrate this tendency in Protestantism of which I have spoken, towards continual disintegration. While one party among the early Protestants were anxious to retain as many as possible of the church doctrines and keep up

in the new faith the form of orthodoxy, another party wished to make the reform a radical one, and get back behind all doctrines as near as possible to primitive Christianity. This division showed itself, as in earlier days, mainly upon the question of the nature of Christ; and can be best considered, therefore, under the two heads of Trinitarian and Unitarian heresies. Let us look to-night at the two leading movements, in Switzerland and England, which, in addition to Lutheranism, constitute Trinitarian heresy.

In the year 1516, a year before Luther nailed his theses to the church-gate at Wittenberg, the pilgrims to the cloister of Maria-Einsiedeln, in Switzerland, were startled by the words of a bold young priest, telling them that their prayers and gifts to the Virgin, whom they had come especially to worship, were of no avail. For years they, and their fathers before them, had come annually to this sacred place, read the inscription over the shrine, "Here is complete absolution for guilt and for punishment of sins," and obtained from the little black image of the Virgin before which they knelt, recovery from many a painful disease; yet here was a preacher of the convent who assured them that Mary could not help them. "The more exalted Mary is above all creatures," said he, "the more profound her reverence toward God her Son, and the more abhorrent will it be to her to receive honor as divine."[1]

It mattered little, as you see, from what point the new

[1] Christoffel's Life of Zwingli, pp. 25, 26.

truth started. In Germany it was the sale of indulgences, in Switzerland it was the worship of the Virgin, that aroused the latent discontent and kindled the flames of the Reformation. The young priest was Ulric Zwingli,[1] a very different person from Luther, less impetuous and rude, more scholarly and gentle, yet with quite as positive a purpose, and holding quite as definite a place in the great work of the Reformation. Zwingli was a devoted student of the classics, and had some strange notions about the philosophers and poets in whose grand words he found such joy. "Plato," he said, "drank from the sacred fount;" Seneca was "a holy man;" Pindar "speaks of the gods in language so divine" that the very knowledge of the true God must be there. Indeed, Pindar, according to Zwingli, "throws light upon our Scriptures," and helps us to read them aright.[2] From the classics Zwingli turned with equal zeal to the Greek Scriptures, wrote out the Epistles of Paul in the original tongue, committed the entire New Testament to memory, and made for himself the startling discovery that "Popery is not in the Scripture." While Luther was still disclaiming all hostility to the papacy, and seeking to avoid a rupture with Leo X., Zwingli declared openly, "The papacy must fall."[3]

Two years later, this same preacher appeared in Zurich, openly denouncing the sale of indulgences, as Luther had done a year before in Germany;[4] and in 1523, the Zurich

[1] Born, 1484.

[2] Ranke's Reformation, p. 395; Christoffel, p. 386; St. Liguori, p. 293.

[3] Chris. p. 31.

[4] Chris. p. 37.

Council issued a decree against images and the mass, declaring that everything must be proved by the Scriptures themselves ;[1] and also, in the same year, publicly indorsed the new heresy in the following terms: "We, the Burgomasters, have resolved that said Huldrich Zwingli continue, as hitherto, to preach the Holy Scriptures."[2] How great a novelty it was in those days to "preach the Holy Scriptures," may be guessed from the following anecdote. When Zwingli advised the priests, in public council, to read their Bibles, the Pastor of Schlieren arose and gravely answered, "How can one who has a small living buy a Testament? I have such a poor living, and must here put in a word."[3]

Thus the Reformation sprang into being, almost at the same hour, in two lands and under two distinct leaders. How did these two leaders stand related to each other? is our next question. They joined forces, of course, and made common cause against a common foe?

It *is* strange that they did not. Stranger still that instead of becoming brothers in the glorious cause, they became bitter foes. Strangest of all that the bitterness of their enmity should have sprung out of the most sacred mystery of their common faith. That two such men should have differed in their methods and their beliefs is not to be wondered at ; but that they should have failed to realize what that difference meant, that there was not magnanimity enough on both sides, or devotion enough to the

[1] Hase, 386 ; Dorner's Protestant Theology, ii. 232.
[2] Chris. p. 107. [3] Id. p. 108.

great Reform to enable them to forget their differences, is the most discreditable fact connected with the early history of our Protestant faith. The story of this discord is a mortifying one; but it must not be passed wholly by.

Several years before Luther and Zwingli met, efforts had been made to unite them; but an instinct of hostility showed itself from the outset. When Luther's name first came into notoriety, and every reformer found himself called Lutheran, Zwingli, with perhaps natural sensitiveness, while acknowledging Luther's great services, stoutly refused to be called by his name. "Who called me Lutheran," he asked, "when I began to preach these doctrines in 1516, before a single individual in this part of the country had heard the name of Luther? Why not call me Paulean because I preach as Paul preached? Let not the name of Christ be changed into that of Luther, for Luther has not died for us."[1]

The great point of controversy between them, however, was the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Luther's view of the Swiss ideas upon this subject, and the chances of agreement between the two parties in the beginning, may be gathered from these words, written in 1527. The Landgrave of Hesse, conscious of the necessity of uniting all the friends of reform against the Emperor, made an effort to bring Luther and Zwingli together, and received this response from Luther: "Well, since they thus insult all reason, I will give them a Lutheran warning. Cursed be this concord! cursed be this charity! down, down

[1] Chris. pp. 73–75.

with it, to the bottomless pit of hell! These enthusiasts, who murder Jesus Christ, my Lord, wish to murder me also."[1]

What did he mean by "murdering Jesus Christ the Lord," and why this explosion of wrath? These questions cannot be better answered than by a short extract from the debate which actually took place between Luther and Zwingli, soon after these words were written. The Landgrave, convinced that such men needed only to meet face to face to honor and love each other, summoned them both, with many companions, to Marburg in 1529. It was the one opportunity for uniting Swiss and German Protestantism; and in what spirit the opportunity was met these words will show better than any description. It should be remembered, in justice to both parties, that the quotations here given are from Zwingli's account of the event.

"I protest," said Luther, when the discussion began, "that I differ from my adversaries with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and that I always shall differ. Christ has said, 'This is my body:' let them show me that a body is not a body." "But," interposed Zwingli, "the soul is fed with the spirit, not with the flesh." *Luther.* "It is with the mouth that we eat the body; the soul does not eat it." *Zwingli.* "Christ's body is then a corporal nourishment, not a spiritual." *Luther.* "You are captious." *Zwingli.* "Not so, but you utter contradictory things." *Luther.* "If God

[1] D'Aubigné's Reformation in Germany and Switzerland, iv. 80.

should present me wild apples, I should eat them spiritually! In the Eucharist, the mouth receives the body of Christ, and the soul believes in his words." *Zwingli.* "I oppose you with this article of our faith: 'He ascended into heaven.' He cannot be in several places at once." *Luther.* "Were I desirous of reasoning thus, I should prove that Christ had a wife, that he had black eyes and lived in our good country of Germany. I care little about mathematics." . . . "As soon as the words of consecration are pronounced over the bread, the body is there, however wicked be the priest who pronounces them." *Zwingli.* "You are thus re-establishing Popery." *Luther.* "I will not, when Christ's body is in question, hear speak of a particular place. I absolutely will not." *Zwingli.* "Must everything, then, exist precisely as you will it?"[1]

Little was to be hoped from a conference like this. Perhaps the Swiss were stubborn. Certain it is that Luther would listen to no overtures, save that his opponents should forsake their ground and stand on his. When at last no further argument remained, he seized the velvet cover from the table, on which he had written with chalk, "hoc est corpus meum,"[2] and held it before his adversaries' face, saying: "See! this is our text. You have not yet driven us from it, and we care for no other proofs."[3] As they were about to separate, the Landgrave begged them at least to part fraternally, and Zwingli, bursting into tears, offered Luther his hand; but Luther

[1] D'Aubigné, iv. pp. 80–100. [2] Matt. xxvi. 26.
[3] D'Aubigné, iv. p. 98.

turned angrily away, saying: "Yours is a different spirit from ours." Afterwards he added: "You do not belong to the union of the Christian church, we cannot acknowledge you as brethren."[1]

In spite of this, however, the Landgrave, aided by the readiness of the Swiss to accept any terms of harmony which did not falsify their own belief, succeeded in preventing immediate rupture and in establishing a temporary agreement between the two parties. At his solicitation, Luther finally consented to draw up fifteen articles of faith in terms common to both sides, in which the article on the Lord's Supper was skilfully made to say both that the "very body and blood of Christ" were in the emblems, and that they might be *spiritually eaten;* so making it possible for both parties to sign the paper.[2]

No real union, however, was effected, as the signatures of the two opponents upon the same paper were of less account than the conviction left in their minds of the wide distance in spirit and in belief that actually separated them. The Swiss theologians, with their followers, although not exactly accepting Zwingli's theory of the Eucharist as a mere sign of commemoration and fellowship, have yet always been content to affirm that the communicant partakes of Christ in a purely spiritual sense; while the Lutheran church, in insisting that Christ's body, though not actually converted into the bread of the Eucharist, is yet "in, under, or with" the bread, still

[1] D'Aubigné, iv. pp. 101, 102.
[2] Id. iv. 105; Hase, p. 380.

holds a belief hardly distinguishable from the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Zwingli lived but little while after this dispute. In a battle near Zurich, in 1531, in which the five Forest Cantons (Catholic) struck a fatal blow at Protestant supremacy in Switzerland, Zwingli was left dead upon the field; and the career of this most interesting of the Reformers was thus brought to an abrupt close.[1] Although he had not lived long enough to determine the direction of Swiss Protestantism, yet his connection with it lent it an element of intellectual freedom which it never wholly lost, and which was just enough to save the whole movement from the charge of narrow dogmatism. After his death the Swiss Reformation took a new form.

In 1541, John Calvin, a French theologian who had fled from Paris in 1533, and taken refuge in Basle, was called to Geneva to assume direction of a combined social and religious reform which was already in progress there, but which others had failed to control. Once before, in 1536, Calvin had been in Geneva for a similar purpose; but his severity was so great, that he had been driven from the place. Now he returned, somewhat reluctantly, indeed, as his letters show,[2] yet resolved upon carrying out his reforms relentlessly, and proceeded at once to turn the little republic into a theocracy, with himself as its supreme head. Stern and austere by temperament, averse to pleasure himself, and seeing in the harmless gayety of

[1] Hase, p. 388.

[2] Bonnet's Letters of J. Calvin, i. 48, 51, 155, 163.

others the tokens of man's absolute depravity, he succeeded in establishing in Geneva the most rigid moral despotism to which any community in modern, or, perhaps, in ancient times ever submitted. Through a College of Pastors and Consistorial Court of Discipline, he sought to bring even the most private life of the citizens directly under theocratic rule. He forbade all amusements, dances, and noisy games as "unworthy of the gravity of a Christian." Even ordinary conversation is said to have been subjected to censorship. He required every person to abjure the Catholic faith. He established a system of domiciliary visits by which once a year the faith and manners of every inhabitant were discovered, and the ignorant or perverse separated from the company of the righteous.[1]

This same inflexible spirit, and the same austere and uncompromising temper, Calvin carried with him into his theology, where they gained for him even greater power. Indeed, these proved to be precisely the traits of mind suited to times of theological transition when new doctrines were needed, and when great superiority of nature or fineness of soul was of less account than strong conviction and a relentless will. "Calvin was one of those absolute men," says one of his recent critics, "cast complete in one mould, who is taken in wholly at a single glance; one letter, one action, suffices for a judgment of him. There were no folds in that inflexible soul, which

[1] Comp. Martin's Hist. de France, viii. 323; Guizot's Calvin; Letters, i. 292; ii. 38, 272; Darras, iv. 128.

never knew doubt or hesitation. . . . Truth is completely involved in nice distinctions. Now, the man who would exert a powerful influence on the world must not regard nice distinctions; he must believe that he alone is wholly right, and that they who differ from him are wholly wrong." [1]

This single trait of seeing his own thought so clearly that he could see no truth beside, Calvin possessed in preëminent degree; and he succeeded, as the world knows, in stamping it almost ineffaceably upon Protestant theology. In his "Institutes of the Christian Religion," written in 1535, when he was twenty-six years old, he laid out the whole ground of Christian theology, with a minuteness of detail, a clearness and precision of statement, and a calm assumption of divine knowledge, which left nothing further to be said, and which reduced Protestantism at once to a finished dogmatic system. It should be added, that by employing the French language instead of Latin for this purpose, and thus revealing for the first time the qualities of lucid and exact statement inherent in that language, Calvin did for his own tongue very much what Luther, by his translation of the Scriptures, had done for German literature. In Calvin's hands the French language became, as the historian Martin expresses it, "the mother of the grand prose of the seventeenth century." [2]

It would be quite superfluous to define Calvinism to a New England audience. It is enough to say, that Calvin,

[1] Renan's Studies of Relig. Hist. and Criticism, p. 286.
[2] Martin's Hist. viii. 186; Guizot, 176.

like Luther, turned to the Augustinian doctrines for his interpretation of Christianity; but went as far beyond Luther, in the paths of Predestination and Irresistible Grace, as Luther had gone beyond Romanism. While Luther and the Fathers had gone but half-way in their application of those doctrines, Calvin dared to follow his premises to the end. Luther claimed to believe unequivocally in predestination, yet faltered, as all since Augustine had done before him, when it came to the question of eternal woe as well as of eternal happiness; but Calvin insisted as stoutly on predestination to hell as on predestination to heaven. All the Fathers but Augustine, Calvin declares, had explained away original sin as applying to the animal nature only, and not to the spiritual or rational; Calvin claims that man is absolutely corrupt, body and soul. He is "shapen in iniquity." "Before we behold the light of the sun, we are in God's sight defiled and polluted." Again, all but Augustine had tried, while admitting God's foreknowledge, to save under some form the freedom of the human will; Calvin maintains God's absolute decrees, whether anything be left of the human will or not. "God not only foresaw the fall of the first man, and the consequent ruin of his posterity, he willed it, too." "God, in saving some and condemning others, has no regard to their merits or good works," but only to "his good pleasure." "Sin is a necessity, yet we must bear the consequence of it; it is involuntary, yet we cannot escape it."[1]

[1] Calvin's Institutes, B. ii. 292, 304; B. iii. 22.

To show how the Calvinistic system strikes the Catholic mind, I will add this quotation from the Catholic historian, Darras: "The predominant characteristic of Calvin's system is the doctrine of absolute predestination, carried out with a fanatical rigor even to absurd consequences. According to Calvin, God, the primordial author of good and evil, has from all eternity cast off a portion of his creatures, and doomed them to eternal punishment, in order to show his justice in them. God caused the first man to fall by sin, and involved the whole of Adam's posterity in the revolt. The divine will incites to the commission of crime those whom it has predestined to eternal loss. Free-will is no more. The tyranny of a God who punishes sins of which he is the final author, did not terrify Calvin. He openly professed his belief. 'Among men,' said he, 'some are created for eternal life, others for eternal death.' Man is saved, just as he is lost, in spite of himself. There is no more merit in being a saint than in being a reprobate."[1] Romanism finds little to recognize, it seems, and less to admire, in the pure Augustinian faith.

In regard to the important point of controversy which, before his coming among them, had divided the German and Swiss reformers, Calvin occupied a middle ground. With Luther he agreed that Christ is really, though not locally, present in the elements; with Zwingli, he declared that it is not the flesh of Jesus which the communicant receives, but his substance and power. When Christ says, "This *is* my body," both Calvin and Zwingli under-

[1] Darras, iv. 125.

stand the words to mean, "This *signifies;*" yet are the elements not symbols only, according to Calvin, but actual instrumentalities through which Christ elevates the believer.[1] But Calvin's position brought the two parties no nearer together. The mutual distrust was too great for any subtleties of definition to remove. The Lutherans were determined to see in Calvin only a second Zwingli; and succeeded so well in identifying the two, that the German churches which sympathized with the Swiss doctrines were forced, at about the time of Calvin's death, to organize themselves as the German Reformed Church. The Heidelberg Catechism, published in 1563, marks the foundation of the new sect; and to this day, the Calvinistic church in Germany claims for itself, as against the Lutheran, the specific title of Reformed.

No account of Calvin, or of the faith which he introduced, would be complete without some allusion to his dealings with those whom he chose to consider heretics. Assuming for himself, as we have seen, the infallible judgment which he had denied to the church and the pope, he was quite consistent in pronouncing all other doctrines heresy, and in following them with a persecution as relentless as that with which Romanism had pursued its most dangerous foes. For some strange reason, the treatment of Servetus has always been singled out as an isolated event in Calvin's career, and the one solitary blot upon his fame. Nothing could be more erroneous. It was not an isolated event, nor would Calvin himself have con-

[1] Hase, p. 401; St. Liguori, p. 298; Dorner, i. 407.

fessed that it was a blot upon his character. It was but one of many acts to which the logic of his position carried him, and from which no gentleness of spirit, or respect for moral heroism, or appreciation of the truth that is above all human surmises, caused him to shrink. Calvin made no concealment of his views concerning the treatment of heretics. He wrote to the Regent of England during the minority of Edward VI., "As I understand, Sire, you have two sorts of insurgents against the King and the State of the realm; . . . The whole body of them richly deserve to be suppressed by the sword which is intrusted to you, seeing that they defy not only the King, but God, who has seated him on his royal throne, and has commissioned you to protect his people as well as his majesty." He wrote also concerning some unknown offender: "Could I have had my way, I could have gladly seen him rot in a ditch, and his coming delighted me as much as if he had cleft my heart with a dagger. . . . Had he not got away so quickly, it would not have been my fault if he had escaped the flames." When we add to these words the title of one of his works, "A defence of the orthodox faith, . . . in which it is proved that heretics may rightfully be coerced by the sword," we are quite prepared for the treatment which all who ventured to oppose his social or religious doctrines were wont to receive at his hands.[1] Among these, the best known are Bolsec, who differed from Calvin on the question of predestination and free-will, and was therefore banished from Geneva; Castellio,

[1] Comp. Renan's Studies, Essay on John Calvin.

a learned scholar, whom Calvin at first warmly befriended, but afterward, because of certain views concerning the authenticity of Scripture books, not only drove into exile and poverty, but charged with stealing the sticks which he was obliged to gather for his support; Gruet, who publicly attacked the consistory, and was tortured and beheaded; Gentilis, who "barely escaped the scaffold for a time by retracting his opinions" concerning the Trinity.[1]

The case of Servetus, therefore, was but one among many; a little more bitter and relentless than the rest, but springing from the same motives and the result of the same principles. Michael Servetus was a Spanish theologian and philosopher of unusual scientific attainments, and with a passionate love of religious study which led him to welcome the Reformation as an opportunity for cleansing Christianity of all its corruptions, and restoring its primitive doctrines. As he reckoned among the corruptions of Christianity, however, the personality of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and Infant Baptism, he found himself at once an outcast, both from the Catholic church and from the ranks of the Reformers, and an especial object of enmity to Calvin, whose theology Servetus allowed himself to criticise freely. Against such a heretic, Calvin believed that no measures were too severe, or too dishonorable. Learning that Servetus, in 1553, was in retirement in Vienne, under an assumed name, he stooped to the

[1] Lecky's Rationalism, ii. 53–56; Renan's Stud. p. 291; Guizot's Calvin, p. 275.

device of warning the Catholic authorities against his heresies, and forwarding confidential letters which Servetus had written him, to serve as evidence to convict him before a Catholic tribunal. Servetus was arrested and confronted by the proof of his guilt; and had he not escaped from prison, Calvin would have had the delight of using the fires of the Inquisition to burn his own heretics. He escaped however, though to meet no kinder fate, and fled to Switzerland, with the purpose of going to Italy. At Geneva he fell into the hands of Calvin himself, who was not slow in availing himself of the opportunity to crush out the hated heresy. Before Servetus came to Geneva, Calvin wrote to Farel, "Should he come and my authority avail, I will not suffer him to go away alive." He brought him at once to trial on three charges: denial of the Trinity; denial of the Divinity of Christ; pantheism. His nominal accuser was Calvin's private secretary, Nicolas de la Fontaine; and during the progress of the trial, Calvin wrote again to Farel, "I hope that the punishment will be death." His wish was fulfilled, and Servetus was sentenced to be burned. Never, in the annals of the Inquisition, was the death of a heretic surrounded by more horror, or attended by less magnanimity or more vindictiveness on the part of the executioners. The pile was erected on an eminence outside the city. Servetus was bound to the stake by an iron chain, with a heavy cord around his neck, the fagots were of green oak-branches with the leaves still on. So heart-rending were his cries, as the slow fires crept around him, that the by-

standers ran for dry wood to cast upon the flames; and after a half-hour of frightful agony, he expired.[1]

When Huss, upon being tied to the stake, cried out, "Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me," a Roman Catholic historian, in recording the event, added, "We should not forget that the devil has martyrs and infuses into them a false constancy."[2] When Servetus, in being led to the stake, fell upon his knees in prayer, crying, "O God! O God!" Farel shouted to the crowd who looked on, "See what power Satan has when he takes possession of a man. This man is learned, but he is now possessed by the devil." And when Servetus, even at the stake, cried, "Jesus Christ, Son of the Eternal God," and would not say, "eternal Son of God," Calvin was afterwards moved to write, "When, under the hands of the executioner, he refused to call Jesus Christ the eternal son of God, who will say that that was a martyr's death?"[3]

From these revolting scenes, and this new and baser birth of papal infallibility, it is pleasant to turn to another movement of the young faith in another land.

The Reformation in England took upon itself, as might be expected, a wholly distinctive character. It was less a sudden outburst of new-born religious feeling, or a protest against papal tyranny or corruption, than the gradual loosening of ties under which the nation had long been chaf-

[1] Revue des Deux Mondes, Feb. and Mar., 1848; Darras, iv. 128; St. Liguori, p. 302; Hase, p. 433.

[2] St. Liguori, p. 254.

[3] Rev. pp. 843, 844.

ing, and the final renunciation of a foreign supremacy which had long been wearisome. It was an affair of state quite as much as of church, and of administration rather than of theology. At first, indeed, England showed but little interest in the German controversies, and little taste for them. Henry VIII. made himself conspicuous as defender of the old faith; and in his new pride of authorship and disgust at the rude blows which Luther at first dealt him, seemed little inclined to give the new views a hearing. As late as 1521, four Lincolnshire peasants had been burned to death, their children being forced to light the fagots, for reading the Gospels and denouncing pilgrimages. As late as 1526, all copies of Tyndale's translation of the New Testament found in London were burned, as containing "infectious poison."[1] As late even as 1533, Mr. John Frith, an "excellent scholar of the Unity of Cambridge," was burned in Smithfield for denying the real presence.[2] After bringing upon himself the papal ban, however, through his marriage with Anne Boleyn, his feelings changed; and in 1534, a decree of Parliament was easily passed abrogating the papal supremacy in England, and constituting the king "the only supreme head of the church."[3] This simple act, however, established neither Protestantism nor the Reformation. A period of strange confusion followed, in which the people, too ignorant to comprehend the new theological ideas let

[1] D'Aubigné, v. 214, 297. [2] Neal's Hist. of Puritans, i. 35.
[3] Hume's Hist. iv. 89; Neal's Hist. of Pur. i. 32; Hook's Lives of Archbishops of Canterbury, vii. 487–492.

loose upon them, fluctuated violently between the two faiths; in which the King himself, dreading the new freedom he had sanctioned, tried still to cling to "the pure Catholic faith;" and in which followers of Luther and followers of the pope were frequently executed on the same gibbet.[1] The reign of Mary, fortunately short, brought the chief leader of the reformers, Cranmer, with many humbler adherents, to the stake;[2] nor even in the reign of Elizabeth was it possible to organize the national church, but by mingling in the new formularies, Catholic ceremonial with Protestant theology. In 1571, the forty-two Articles of Faith first proposed by Cranmer, afterwards reduced to thirty-nine, were finally sanctioned by Parliament, and subscriptions to them made obligatory for all the clergy.[3]

It is curious to note the various compromises which had to be effected, chiefly under Cranmer's guidance, before the church of England assumed its final form. Many of the earlier reformers evidently wished the revolt from Rome to be as complete and sweeping in England as it was in Germany or Switzerland. Macaulay gives a long list of bishops of Edward's reign, none of them belonging to the Protestant extremists, who were as strongly opposed to the Romish ritual as to Romish doctrines. "Bishop Hooper, who died manfully at Gloucester for his religion, long refused to wear the episcopal vestments. Bishop Ridley . . . pulled down the ancient

[1] Hume, iv. 94, 97; Hase, p. 422. [2] 1556.
[3] Hagenbach, Hist. of Doc. ii. 167.

altars of his diocese, and ordered the Eucharist to be administered in the middle of churches, at tables which the papists irreverently-termed oyster-boards. Bishop Jewel pronounced the clerical garb to be a stage dress, a fool's coat, and promised that he would spare no labor to extirpate such degrading absurdities. Archbishop Grindal long hesitated about accepting a mitre, from dislike of what he regarded as the mummery of consecration. Bishop Parkhurst uttered a fervent prayer that the church of England would propose to herself the church of Zurich as the absolute pattern of a Christian community. Bishop Ponet was of opinion that the word bishop should be abandoned to the papists, and that the chief officers of the purified church should be called superintendents. Archbishop Cranmer himself plainly avowed his conviction that, in the primitive times, there was no distinction between bishops and priests, and that the laying on of hands was altogether unnecessary." [1]

The ritualistic party prevailed, however; and in 1541, out of the half-dozen liturgical forms or Uses then in vogue in England, Cramner selected the Use of Sarum, or Salisbury, on which to base the ritual of the new church. The only changes on which Cramner seems to have ventured at first were, to purge the Catholic service of its "popish legends," to order the Psalter to be printed in English as well as in Latin, and to determine upon and translate a uniform Litany for all the churches. The Litany now in use in the English church, with the exception of certain

[1] Macaulay's Hist. of England, vol. i. ch. 1.

supplications to the Virgin and to angels and archangels, which were omitted in later revisions, is essentially the work of Cranmer's hands.[1]

In 1548, the first year of Edward's reign, an entire Liturgy was prepared in English, and the Book of Common Prayer appeared, followed immediately by an Act of Uniformity, by which it was "enacted that all and singular ministers shall be bounden to say and use the mattens, evensong, and mass in such order and form as is mentioned in the same book and none other or otherwise."[2] In 1552, so great was the outcry against this service that the Second Book of Edward VI. appeared, in which prayer for the dead and the festival of St. Mary Magdalene were omitted, the terms Mass and Altar were finally supplanted (or intended to be) by Communion and Lord's Table, and the various forms of exorcism which the ancient liturgies had retained were reduced to the modest acts, still preserved in the English church, of the sign of the cross in baptism, and the consecration of the Bread and Cup at the Lord's Supper.[3] This Second Book of Edward VI., further revised under Elizabeth, and again under James I. and Charles II., is essentially the same as that now in use in England and America.

Having thus looked to Rome for its ritual, the church of England turned to Protestantism for its doctrines. The forty-two Articles which first formed the

[1] Hook, vii. 143, 204, 265; Stanley's Chris. Institutions, p. 262.

[2] Hook, vii. 275.

[3] Hook, vii.; Blunt's Annotations of Book of Common Prayer; Proctor's Hist. of Book of Common Prayer.

Anglican creed were apparently of German descent, so close a resemblance do they bear to a formulary of the Archbishop of Cologne known to have been in Cranmer's possession, which was itself based upon the Augsburg Confession.[1] Even in their later form, indeed, traces of the sacramental controversy which separated the Swiss and German churches plainly appear, and show a laudable purpose on the part of the English church to satisfy, if possible, both the accepters and the rejecters of the Real Presence. While the Catechism meets the needs of the stoutest Lutheran or even Catholic, in the words, "The Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed[2] taken and received by the faithful," the twenty-eighth Article satisfies the best Calvinist by declaring, "The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner;" and the Communion Service says, "Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith."

Indeed, the theology of the church of England has always been a little hard to fix. In the thirty-nine Articles, the doctrines of Original Sin, Predestination, Election, Justification by Faith, the Powerlessness of Good Works, all stand in apparently their most uncompromising form; yet how much these articles mean seems to have been a question in every period of the history of the church. As late as 1578, Calvin's Catechism was in use at the University of Cambridge. Yet in 1774, it seemed to be already

[1] Hook, vii. 289.

[2] Changed in the American Prayer Book to "spiritually."

in doubt within the church itself whether its faith was Calvinistic or not; as in that year a work by Toplady appeared, entitled "Historic Proof of Doctrinal Calvinism of the Church of England," together with a reply by Archbishop Danbury and by Dean Kepling, styled "The Articles of the Church of England proved to be not Calvinistic." At the beginning of this century, the doubt still continued; as Bishop Tomline published in 1811 a "Refutation of Calvinism," while in 1844, Dr. Laurence, Professor at Oxford, gave in a Bampton lecture, "An Attempt to illustrate those Articles of the Church of England improperly considered Calvinistic."[1] It can safely be said that, were the writings of the principal English theologians of the last three centuries to be compared, they would present as wide a range of theological opinion, and as vast a diversity of dogmatic belief, as we have already found in the church Fathers, the Justins and Clements and Tertullians, the Cyprians, Irenæuses, and Origens, of the first three centuries of the Christian church.

Still more significant have been certain judgments of the church itself within the last few years. As the Roman church speaks through its councils, so the English church speaks through the Queen's Privy Council. Twice within the present generation, the Privy Council has had to speak upon questions of the gravest dogmatic interest, brought up for final decision from the ecclesiastical courts below. In 1850 or 1851, the case

[1] Hagen. ii. 183, 184.

of the Rev. Cornelius Gorham was brought before it, whom the Bishop of Exeter had refused to institute to a vicarage, on the ground that he denied that regeneration is given or conferred in the sacrament of Baptism, notwithstanding the Catechism teaches that doctrine. The court, without passing upon the correctness of Mr. Gorham's views, decided that, however it might be with the Catechism or the Baptismal Service, those views did not contradict the Articles, and had in fact been held without censure by many eminent prelates and divines.[1] In other words, the sacramental efficacy of baptism, an important doctrine of the Lutheran as well as the Catholic church, is left an open question by the church of England.

In 1864, the still more noted case of the "Essays and Reviews" was brought before the Privy Council, in which two writers, holding positions in the church, were charged with heretical opinions concerning the Inspiration of the Scriptures, Eternal Punishment, and the "Merits of Christ." The court decided that although these writers held rationalistic views on these points, from which the court itself dissented, yet the language of the Articles was not so explicit, nor the opinions of church theologians so uniform, on either of the points, that the doctrines in question could be pronounced heretical. Every charge against the writers was therefore dismissed. In other words, the special Inspiration of the Scriptures, Eternal Punishment, and the Imputa-

[1] See Chamb. Encyc., art. Gorham.

tion of the "Merits of Christ," are open questions in the English church.[1] "As the Gorham judgment," said Dean Stanley at the time, "established the legal position of the Puritan or Evangelical party in the church of England, so the present judgment establishes the legal position of those who have always claimed the right of free inquiry and latitude of opinion."[2]

The great diversity of opinion sheltered by the English church is a fact almost universally recognized, and viewed with sorrow or pride according to the position of the individual. Said a writer in the London Times, not long ago: "This church possesses every attribute, every advantage, and every disadvantage, of a compromise. Her articles and authorized formularies are so drawn as to admit within her pale, persons differing as widely as it is possible for the professors of Christian religion to differ from each other. Unity was neither sought nor obtained, but comprehension was aimed at and accomplished."[3] Lord Chatham said that in his time "the English church had Calvinistic Articles, a Papistic Service, and an Arminian clergy."[4] "The other Protestant churches," says Döllinger, "possess, in Symbolic Books, at least the possibility of unity of doctrine; but the English church has the germ of discord and ecclesiastical dissolution in its normal condition,

[1] Edin. Review, July, 1864; article by Dean Stanley on "The Three Pastorals."

[2] Same article, p. 140.

[3] Quoted by Döllinger; Church and Churches, p. 157.

[4] Döllinger's Church and Churches, p. 169.

and in its confession of faith. It is a collection of heterogeneous theological propositions, tied together by the Act of Uniformity, but which in a logical mind cannot exist by the side of one another."[1] Merle D'Aubigné, the Swiss historian of the Reformation, takes a very gloomy view of this peculiarity of English Protestantism, and says reproachfully, in reference to the Essays and Reviews trial, "We venture to ask whether this judgment be not subversive of the fundamental principles of the Anglican church?"[2] An able American writer, in an article upon a late general convention of the American Episcopal Church, takes quite a different view. "Dogmatic theology," he says, "is a subordinate interest in the constitution of the Episcopal church, whilst among all other churches it is the controlling interest." "The dominant idea, next to the purpose of religious reform, was institutional and historical, not dogmatic." The same writer enumerates "seven distinct types of doctrine, or tendencies observable within the church," and adds this fine conception of the "true law of the being of the Episcopal church." "The church is broader and better than the men who control it. It cannot, without the destruction of its fundamental law, be made the expression or embodiment of a party. It covers essential Christianity. It knows no theories of Christianity. It seeks to give utterance to the needs of the universal heart, to be the communion and fellowship of all faithful men, allowing

[1] Döllinger, p. 106. [2] D'Aubigné's Hist., Preface, iv.

all freedom, within the limits of the faith, for the existence, the culture, the development of Christian thinking and feeling and living."[1]

This is admirable language; yet it is idle to claim that the lofty ideal which it suggests has yet been realized in the actual English church of any age. Indeed, this very token of its excellence, this superb tolerance of conflicting views, which is here claimed as the characteristic of Episcopacy, is to-day vexing the souls and stirring the deep indignation of hosts of its prominent members. Nor does it seem clear to one who looks from the outside, why, if the Articles are to be so generously construed as to admit all possible interpretations of them, it would not be better to substitute for them the Gospels and Epistles themselves, which have the great advantage of being neither Lutheran nor Calvinistic, but eminently Christian. If the Scriptures contain these so-called Christian doctrines of Trinity, Atonement, and Election, then to accept the Scriptures is to accept them: if the Scriptures do not contain them, why should Christians accept them?

For one, however, I am willing to judge the Episcopal church by the estimate placed upon it by the nobler minds of its communion, and to look forward, with its friends, to the time when it shall justify their generous hopes, and hold within its borders, with no jealous scrutiny or reproachful glance, the honest strivers after truth of every type and faith. I am willing to give it full

[1] Old and New, iv. 460, 463, 469.

credit for even having dreamed of embracing many beliefs in one ecclesiastical communion.

If that hour shall ever come, if either English Episcopacy, or any other Christian body, shall sometime consent to leave entirely to Romanism the fixing of dogmatic Orthodoxy, and shall content itself with offering to its followers a hospitable religious home, in whose sacred quiet, far above the noises and envies of the sects, they may all pursue, under highest influences, and by paths of their own, the divine truth which invites their search, mind encountering mind in friendly difference, then, as it seems to me, the ideal Protestant church will be formed. For it will be a church based not on belief, but on spiritual life.

March 29, 1874.

IX.

UNITARIAN HERESIES.

THE leading sects of the Reformers, as we have seen, while renouncing the authority of the church, and the supremacy of the pope, chose to retain many of the church doctrines. Lutherans, Calvinists, and Anglicans, differing widely on lesser points, agreed in preserving the decrees of ancient councils concerning the Trinity, Incarnation, Original Sin, with the whole dogmatic system of which these are a part.

This was a purely arbitrary decision, of course. When the church was cast off, all its councils and confessions went with it as parts of itself; and if any dogmas were retained, it could only be on the ground of individual preference. The Protestant sects had a perfect right, if they chose, to reject papal supremacy, and retain the Trinity; but, inasmuch as both these doctrines could claim precisely the same sanction, while one had no more scriptural basis than the other, this discrimination could be made only as an exercise of the spiritual freedom which Protestantism had secured. It was an act of reason against authority. In other words, Protestantism being in its very essence rationalism, authority

in matters of doctrine disappeared with the Reformation, and individual reformers or churches were at liberty to accept or reject any of the past beliefs of Christendom at will. In its nobler moods, Protestantism was quite ready to take this lofty ground, and had many fine things to say about the right of private interpretation and the spiritual equality of all Christian believers. When the time came for forming its creed, however, it forgot all this, accepted its fundamental dogmas upon the direct authority of the early councils of the church, and announced its belief in advance for all its followers.

We cannot be surprised, however, if there were some among the early reformers to whom the first three councils seemed no more binding than the last; and who were inclined to exercise freely the new right of private judgment. If the followers of Luther and Calvin discarded Trent, it was entirely natural, and should have excited neither surprise nor resentment, that others should, by the same right, discard Nicæa. As a simple matter of fact, such Protestants there were from the very beginning; and the Reformation had no sooner gained a solid footing, than every one of the dogmas which had been established at such pains in the third and fourth centuries, found itself openly challenged, and forced to prove its right to exist. As the doctrines of the Trinity still, as of old, constituted the chief dividing line between these two schools, and as I have already grouped the one under the head of Trinitarian Heresies, I propose to class the others to-night under the general name of

Unitarian Heresies, and to trace the descent of Unitarianism from the time of the Reformation.

Unitarianism accompanied Protestantism, as it had accompanied early Christianity, from its cradle. The last three centuries have been as full of this heresy as were the first three. Before Luther's death, Unitarianism had appeared in Italy, in Hungary, in Poland, in Spain, in Germany, in England. We find the Trinity on the defensive in every Protestant confession. It received special notice and vindication in the first theological statement of the Reformation, Melanchthon's "Loci-Communes." The Augsburg Confession, in its first article, condemns the "modern Samosatans," who "deny the personality of the Word and the Spirit."[1] Calvin devotes one of the longest chapters of his "Institutes," consisting of twenty-nine sections, to the "Unity of the Divine Essence in three Persons, taught in Scripture from the foundation of the world."[2] The opponents of this doctrine he styles "Arians," "Sabellians," "Prattlers;" and declares that "Satan has provoked fierce disputes concerning the divine essence of the Son and the Spirit," and is "trying in the present day to kindle new flame out of the old embers."[3] In 1533, Melanchthon wrote to a friend, "You know that in reference to the Trinity, I have always feared that these things would again break out. Good God! what disturbances will be raised in the next age, whether the Logos and the Holy Spirit are hypostases [persons].

[1] Confessio Augustana, art. i. "Damnant et Samosatenos veteres et neotericos."

[2] Calvin's Institutes, i. xiii. [3] Id. §§ 21, 22, 23.

I abide by those words of Holy Writ, which direct to pray to Christ, and attribute to him divine honors; but I do not feel compelled to examine more accurately the assertions respecting hypostases."[1]

Many open opponents of the Trinity are mentioned by the historians of this period, besides the few who are familiarly known. Of those whose names alone can be given, were John Campanus of Wittenberg, who, after a careful study of the opinions of the Fathers concerning the Trinity, taught that the Son was born before the creation, but was a subordinate hypostasis to the Father, and that the Holy Spirit was not a person, but simply the divine Essence; George Wicel, who also declared the ancient church doctrine anti-Trinitarian; Valentine Gentilis, whose doctrine was that there were three "divine essences," two being subordinate to the third, and who preached his heresy in Switzerland, Savoy, France, and Poland;[2] Gonesius and Farnovius, who carried anti-Trinitarianism into Poland; Louis Hetzer, who "denied every distinction in the Trinity;"[3] Claudius of Savoy, who taught that Christ was called God, "inasmuch as he had received the fulness of the divine Spirit beyond all other beings;" and George Blandrata, an Italian physician, who established Unitarianism in Transylvania, in 1556, and who is charged by a Catholic historian with having made Arianism "the most numerous sect in Transylvania."[4]

[1] Neander's Dogmas, ii. 650. [2] 1566. [3] 1529.

[4] St. Liguori, Hist. of Heresies, pp. 353, 354; Neander's Dogmas, ii. 646–648; Mosheim's Institutes, iii. 254.

The fate of these reformers testifies anew to a fact, which has already been twice noticed, the reluctance of the leading heretics of the Reformation to grant to others the freedom of opinion which they claimed for themselves. All of these were persecuted; two, Gentilis and Hetzer, were beheaded. Indeed, it does not seem to have occurred to the early Protestants that true religion could possibly be propagated except by violence. They not only did not shrink from taking the lives of heretics, they encouraged and warmly applauded both torture and death. Luther, Calvin, Melanchthon, Beza, Knox, with all their leading followers, claimed the weapons of persecution as essential to the safety of the Christian church. The historian Lecky mentions Zwingli and Socinus, the two rationalists, as the only exceptions to this rule, among the early reformers.[1] Both these men, to the great indignation of their fellow-reformers, took open ground against the persecution of religious opponents, this being counted against Socinus as a greater heresy, if possible, than his Unitarianism. Jurieu, an eminent French minister and writer of Rotterdam, speaks of the idea of universal toleration as "that Socinian dogma, the most dangerous of all held by the Socinian sect, since it tends to ruin Christianity and establish the indifference of religions." He goes so far as to pronounce persecution (or "authority") "the means always employed by Providence to establish the true religion and overthrow the false."[2]

[1] Lecky's Rationalism in Europe, ii. 51, note.

[2] Quoted by Lecky, ii. 52, note.

Judged simply from the general character of his theology, Zwingli certainly deserves the title of rationalist; inasmuch as he counted original sin a "disease," carrying with it no guilt, considered baptism as no more essential to eternal life than circumcision, regarded the Lord's Supper a simple commemoration of Christ's death, and ventured the startling opinion, in a letter to Francis I., that he would probably have the joy, in heaven, of meeting, "not only the first and second Adam, Abel, Peter, and Paul, but also Hercules, Theseus, Socrates, Aristides, Numa, Cato, and the Scipios."[1] As he did not happen, however, to come to any break with the Trinity, I must pass him by to-night, and take up another who, both for his melancholy fate, and for the singular interest and importance of his religious thought, deserves the first place among anti-Trinitarian reformers, Michael Servetus. As his story is less familiar than it should be, I shall make no apology for dwelling upon it at some length.[2]

Michael Servetus was born in Villanueva, Arragon, in 1509, the year of Calvin's birth, and first heard of the new religious doctrines when studying law at Toulouse. Leaving his profession at once, he sought out the reformers, first at Basle, where he met Æcolampadius, then at

[1] Gieseler's Church History, iv. 403, n., 406, n.; St. Liguori, p. 293.

[2] See article in the Revue des Deux Mondes, February and March, 1848, by Émile Saisset. The writer had in his hands, while writing, the copy of Servetus's chief work, which had been used by his accusers in the trial, and which bore marks of the flames from which it had been snatched.

Strasburg, where he found Bucer and Capito, then at Paris, where he met Calvin. To his surprise, however, his ardent reception of the new ideas, and eagerness to follow them to their last conclusions, met with a cold response from these theologians; while his passionate search into the great truths of Christianity thus newly opened seemed to them but idle and restless curiosity. Even Zwingli denounced him as "that wicked and cursed Spaniard;" while Calvin hastened to speak of him as that "frantic" Servetus, "who has thrown all things into confusion."[1]

This hostility is easily explained. Servetus was the only one among these reformers who entered upon the Protestant movement, as a scholar rather than as a theologian; in the interest, not of the church, but of philosophic and religious thought. A reformation which rested in the formation of new sects, and the recoining of old doctrines, seemed to him to stop half-way; and he exasperated his companions by planning "a rejuvenated Christianity, reconstructed from base to summit, the Christianity of the future, which he believed was also the Christianity of the past."[2] That he was of too versatile or erratic a genius to be able himself to found this Christianity of the future, or to leave behind any permanent results, the event seems to have proved. His philosophy died with him; yet his religious speculations are of the highest interest, his glimpses of coming truths were clear and often very startling, he won high reputation in medicine, in law, in theology, in mathematics, and in Oriental

[1] Inst. i. xiii 22. [2] Revue, p. 591.

languages; while the ardent spirit of discovery and insatiate thirst for truth, which he carried into each pursuit in turn, lent a charm to his career which belonged to that of none of his more noted contemporaries.

The character of his genius, and the extent of his researches, cannot be better illustrated than by the contribution which he made to the great discovery of the following century, the circulation of the blood. In this he anticipated Harvey by more than fifty years; and probably no scientific discovery was ever reached by a more remarkable method. Servetus came upon it in the midst of his theological inquiries. In reading the Old Testament he found the statement that "the soul is in the blood; that the soul *is* the blood."[1] "Then," said Servetus, "to know how the soul is formed, I must know how blood is formed; to know how blood is formed, I must know how it flows." "And thus," according to the statement of Flourens, "in his 'Restoration of Christianity,' he is led to the formation of the soul; from the formation of the soul to the formation of blood; and from the formation of blood to pulmonary circulation."[2]

Such a spirit as this found, of course, a most inviting and legitimate field for its inquiries in early Christian thought, and made many discoveries there which had quite escaped the notice of his less bold and inquisitive fellow-reformers. While they went back to Augustine for

[1] Gen. ix. 4.

[2] Nouvelle Biographie Générale, 43, "Servetus"; also Flourens, Jour. des Savants, April, 1854.

a practical system of human salvation, Servetus went back beyond Augustine, and beyond Athanasius, and discovered there a sublime truth which the later dogmas of the church, as he declared, had forgotten and overlaid. He found asserted there, in Jewish and Christian Scripture, and in every religious philosophy of the past, the absolute unity of God. This truth he seized as the kernel of all philosophy and all religion; and devoted his life, with pathetic zeal, to restoring it to its lost supremacy.

The leading points of the philosophy which Servetus based on this truth, though too subtile and fanciful to secure acceptance from our times, are yet worth a passing notice. God, says Servetus, beginning in a thoroughly Platonic vein, is absolutely one and indivisible; the essence and life of all things. In himself incomprehensible, he perpetually reveals himself by his *ideas;* these ideas being not abstractions, but substantial and vivifying principles. The sum of these ideas is the archetypal world, of which the visible world is only a shadowy image. Visible things find their reality and unity in ideas; ideas find their reality and unity in God. God is all; all is God.[1] The application of these principles to Christianity is very striking. These primal ideas, in their totality, constitute the Word of God. They emanate from a primitive type, Christ, who is the type of perfect humanity. The living Jesus, whose historic appearance, supernatural birth, and resurrection Servetus admits, was this eternal and invisible Word taking visible form.

[1] Revue, pp. 605–609.

Christ is the most perfect manifestation of God, his image, his person. Christ *is* God; God, that is, visibly entering into creation. "In Christ, God and man are truly united in one substance, one body, one new man."[1] The divinity and humanity are not two separate things combined; the humanity *is* the divinity. Christ was a man, filled with the divine nature. The Holy Spirit is a divine energy in creation, a moral principle in man. Salvation depends not on certain speculative views of the Trinity, but on the acknowledgment of Christ, in whom alone God reveals himself.[2]

Servetus's dissent from the Trinity, therefore, is on peculiar ground. The doctrine of the Trinity destroys Christ's divinity. Beside tearing the divine essence in three, it tears Christ in two. In separating his human nature from his divine, and making the divine alone sinless and infinite, it proclaims Jesus not the Son of God; God not really come in the flesh.[3] "Empty chimeras! vain refinements! Open the Gospel; where is the trace of these puerile distinctions? Do you find there two Sons of God; the one perfect, infinite, impassable; the other finite, imperfect, subject to temptation and suffering? No! one Christ alone, one Son of God, single and indivisible."[4] "Your Trinity is a product of subtilty and madness. The Gospel knows nothing of it. The old Fathers, Ignatius, Irenæus, Tertullian, are strangers to

[1] Revue, p. 615, notes.

[2] Neander's Dogmas, ii. 648; Hagenbach's Hist. of Doc. ii. 330; Gieseler's Hist. iv. 352, n.

[3] Revue, p. 613.

[4] Revue, p. 612.

these vain distinctions. It is from the school of Greek Sophists that you, Athanasius, prince of tri-theists, have borrowed it. . . . There is no middle 'ground; either there is in God one substance, one essence, one person, or there are three gods. What more absurd than this tri-theism! what abyss of contradictions! . . . Degenerate theism, a thousand times inferior to that of Moses, or of the Talmud, inferior even to the theology of the Koran! Ridiculous divinity, which leads us back to Paganism, to the three-headed Cerberus of ancient mythology!" [1] "They who assert three individual persons in the Godhead," were Servetus's words after hearing his sentence, "do insinuate that there are three Gods. There remains, therefore, both on the mind and understanding, this insuperable perplexity and inexplicable confusion, that three are one, and one is three." [2]

The unity of the divine essence, as against those dogmas which in seeming to assert really destroy it, has never received a nobler vindication than at the hands of Servetus. The idea possessed him wholly; and his bold pursuit of it to its ultimate consequences brought him upon ground which to the sixteenth century seemed impious blasphemy, but in which the nineteenth century can read the anticipation of its own highest thought. Our apostles of science, who are braving their little martyrdoms to-day, will read with sympathy and pride this almost forgotten

[1] Revue, p. 607. Scattered passages from the "Restoration of Christianity."

[2] Drummond's Life of Servetus, p. 152.

incident from the martyrdoms of the past. "Do you maintain," said Calvin to Servetus in his last trial at Geneva, "that our souls are offshoots from the divine substance; that in all being there in one substantial deity?" "I maintain it," was the reply. "Wretched man!" shouted Calvin, stamping his foot, "is this pavement, then, God? Is it God that I trample this moment under foot?" "Unquestionably." "Then," added Calvin ironically, "in the devils themselves is God?" "Do you doubt it?" replied the unflinching Christian pantheist.[1]

But such heroism as this had no charm for the grim dogmatists of early Protestantism. Least of all for Calvin, every sentiment of whose nature was crossed by this fiery, irreverent, unyielding iconoclast. The mind which cares more to see clearly than to see far, and is impatient of any religious truth that will not yield itself to exact and infallible dogma, can tolerate speculative thought only by the exercise of sheer condescension and magnanimity; and magnanimity unfortunately was a trait whose meaning, in theological matters, Calvin did not know. When Servetus published, first his "Seven Books on the Errors of the Trinity," and afterwards his more pronounced and noted work on the "Restoration of Christianity," in which he commented on Calvin's own opinions with daring frankness, his doom, so far as Calvin could compass it, was already sealed. After failing, as we have already seen, to set in motion against Servetus the machinery of Catholic persecution in Vienne, Calvin secured the still

[1] Revue, p. 610.

more brilliant triumph of kindling in Geneva the flames of a Protestant Inquisition; and dismissing into eternity, in frightful agony, the soul that had dared assert the absolute unity of God. After ages have sought to relieve Calvin from the responsibility of this act: but Calvin himself sought no such escape, nor desired it. He did not himself try Servetus nor condemn him; but he brought him to a trial of which the result was foreshadowed from the beginning, and expressed no regret at the issue. Not one of the leading reformers grieved over it. Melanchthon, Bullinger, Beza, and Farel openly approved of it. Protestantism was well content with the death of the "cursed Spaniard."[1]

From Spain we turn to Italy, where, although the Reformation gained no visible foothold, yet Protestantism found itself eagerly welcomed by a little band of scholars who, long before Luther's appearance, had been trained to the most free and fearless speculative thought.[2] Nowhere were the new ideas carried to greater extremes than by the few who received them in Italy.[3] About the year 1546, a little knot of forty men are said to have formed a secret society in Vicenza, in the territory of Venice, for the free discussion of the great religious and philosophical questions which the Reformation had opened. From what we can learn of their discussions, they seem to have dealt with profounder themes than commonly

[1] See Lecture VIII. for death of Servetus.

[2] Lecky's Rationalism, i. 369.

[3] Biographie Générale, 43, "Socinus."

came within the scope of early Protestantism, and to have drawn from a larger scholarship; for they not only reached the conclusions that God was the one Supreme Being, and that Jesus, though born indeed of a Virgin, was but a man; they also claimed that the popular doctrines of the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the personality of the Spirit, Justification, and the Imputation of Christ's merits, were foreign corruptions, "introduced into Christianity by Greek philosophers."[1]

One of this interesting band of religious inquirers was Lælius Socinus, of Siena,[2] heir of a name already eminent in jurisprudence, and destined now, as borne by himself and his more noted nephew, to gain equal eminence in theology.[3] Lælius is described as "a man of rare eloquence, familiar with Biblical languages and as able a critic as in those times it was possible for a man to be;"[4] but little is to be told of his career, except that on the discovery and dispersal of the band of forty, he was forced to flee and found his way to France, to England, to Poland, and finally to Zurich, where he died at the age of thirty-seven. With little of the controversial spirit of Servetus, and showing the tastes of the student

[1] Gieseler, iv. 355, note. [2] 1525-1562.

[3] Bayle speaks of one Socinus (1401), a distinguished jurisconsult of the fifteenth century, as "the most universal man of his age;" of his grandson, the father of Lælius, as "no less illustrious," being Doctor of Jurisprudence at twenty-one, and afterwards professor at Padua and Bologna; and of a son of the latter as "dying young, with the reputation of a learned jurist." Dictionaire Historique et Critique, p. 2604.

[4] Biog. Générale, "Socinus."

rather than the mettle of the reformer, he never sought to disseminate his views beyond the circle of his friends and correspondents, yet left upon others the distinct impress of his own free and original thought. Among these others was his nephew Faustus Socinus of Siena,[1] who was the true founder of Socinianism. He too was a refugee when history first mentions him, having been driven from Italy for his theological opinions before he was twenty, and having escaped to France. Although permitted to return to Italy after his uncle's death, and remaining for twelve years in the service of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, he finally abandoned, of his own accord, the elegant ease of court life, and devoted himself to the study and propagation of a purer theology. His life, unlike that of his uncle, was an active one throughout. On going from Italy to Basle, in 1574, for purposes of study, he excited such theological hostility there that he was forced to leave in 1578, and went next to Transylvania, whither Blandrata had preceded him, and where he found Unitarianism publicly recognized and already firmly established; so firmly, as it proved, that it has maintained its position as a flourishing church to the present day. From Transylvania, he went, in 1579, to Poland, where his uncle had taught Unitarianism more than twenty years before, and where the nephew now preached and disputed with a vigor which made Socinianism from that day a great power in the Christian world.[2] Protestantism, Socinus taught, must rest on the single basis of human reason,

[1] 1539–1604. [2] Faiths of the World, ii. 608.

casting out whatever contradicts reason, and refusing shelter to dogmas which claim acceptance solely as mysteries. His doctrines proved startling, it is true, even to his own sect, and caused his temporary withdrawal from Cracow, at one time even endangering his life; but he remained in Poland, was married there, lost his Italian property by confiscation, battled bravely for his doctrines at the Synod of Brest in 1588, and died in enforced retirement in 1604.

In his theological position, Socinus, who was far less speculative and more exactly critical than Servetus, recalls in many respects the old and much condemned heresy of Paul of Samosata; who held, as you may remember, that Christ, though pure man by nature, yet received such illumination of divine wisdom that he became God by progressive development.[1] One of the main points in Socinus's system, and one in which later Unitarianism has hardly followed his leadership, was that Christ, although not pre-existing, is yet a deified man, has been taken up into heaven where he is now reigning, and consequently must be *worshipped*. This belief he seems to have based upon such passages as John iii. 13: "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, the Son of man which is in heaven;" John vi. 38, 46: "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me;" "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father;" all which he interpreted as mean-

[1] See Lecture II.; Neander's Hist. i. 601.

ing that Christ had risen repeatedly to heaven to receive divine illumination and guidance, and had come down again to earth to impart them to his followers. So strenuously, indeed, did Socinus insist upon the worship of Christ, that this doctrine led, in 1584, to an open rupture between himself and the Polish Unitarians, and created the two parties of "worshippers (adorantes) and "non-worshippers."

Perhaps I cannot better point out the leading doctrines of this peculiar theology, than by a few quotations from one of the two Polish Catechisms; both of which have an interest for us as being, so far as I know, the only official creeds or confessions which Unitarianism has ever given to the world. In 1574, a catechism was published in Cracow, styled, "Catechism and Confession of the Congregations gathered in Poland in the name of Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Lord." In 1605, after the Polish Unitarians had become Socinian, appeared in Racow, under the auspices of Socinus himself, the "Racovian Catechism," arranged under these eight heads: I. Scripture. II. Way of Salvation. III. Knowledge of God. IV. Knowledge of Christ. V. Prophetic Office of Christ. VI. Kingly Office of Christ. VII. Priestly Office of Christ. VIII. Church of Christ. Some of the questions and answers, very freely translated from the Cracovian Catechism, are as follows:[1] "Whence do we learn the Christian religion?" "From the Sacred Writings; especially the New Testament." "Are there any Sacred Writings except the New

[1] See Gieseler, iv. 367, n.; Winer's Confessions of Christendom.

Testament?" "There are; the Old Testament; but the truth of the Christian religion is contained only in the New, and that only demands our faith."[1] "Do you recognize, beside the human nature of Christ, also a divine?" "Not if we are to understand by divine the same essence as God's."[2] "Who is Christ?" "The only-begotten Son of God, who by divine power has become God, and has received all power in heaven and earth."[3] "As Christ has received divine power, he must receive divine honor." "In what does divine honor consist?" "In adoring him, and receiving his aid."[4] "Is the Holy Spirit ever called God?" "Never." "Is it a person?" "No. Since the Holy Spirit is in God, and God is never said to be in the Holy Spirit, it plainly is not a person." "Was Adam originally good?" "No! else he would not have sinned."[5] "What followed from Adam's fall?" "Death (for the whole race), but not corruption, nor loss of free-will."[6] "What shall we say of Christ's person?" "That he was by nature a true man, and when on earth was mortal, but is now immortal." "Was he a common man?" "No! he was not pure man; but was conceived of the Virgin, having no father but God."[7] "Should infants be baptized?" "No, there is no authority for it in Scripture."[8] "What is the object of the Lord's Supper?" "Some call it a sacrifice; some a sacrament; some say it is for remission of sins; it is really an institution

[1] Winer, 45. [2] Id. 64. [3] Not in first edition.
[4] Winer, 65. [5] Id. 84. [6] Id. 95.
[7] Id, 117. [8] Id. 238.

to commemorate his death."[1] "How do we commemorate his death?" "By giving thanks to Christ, for having shed his blood through ineffable love to us."[2]

The Unitarianism of to-day would hardly recognize itself in these remarkable doctrines. Indeed, it is always singular to see how reluctantly even professed rationalism breaks with venerated notions. Socinus declaring that Christ "became God" and must be worshipped, Servetus claiming that Christ is God assuming visible form, and defending against Orthodoxy Christ's divinity, Arius calling Christ "perfect God," would not in these days be counted dangerous heretics. Yet Orthodoxy was quite right in its suspicions and its fears. The spirit of Protestant rationalism was there, and these crude dogmas were the stammering accents in which the infant heresy was proclaiming its faith.

To all appearance, this special form of heresy was stifled at its birth; for Socinianism, banished from Poland half a century after its founder's death, has had no recognized existence since that day, except under a modified form in Transylvania.[3] Yet it has not died, nor was its influence limited to Poland. Bayle, writing in 1700 of Socinus and his work, said: "The sect was driven from Poland in 1658, and has much fallen off in visible estate; but no one denies that it has invisibly greatly multiplied, and is growing day by day. Indeed, in the present condition of things, many think that Europe must not be surprised, if only a few princes should adopt it, or even remove its

[1] Winer, 264. [2] Id. 264. [3] Gieseler, iv. 370.

political disabilities, to find herself Socinian very soon. Against its progress can only be mentioned the fact that it disapproves of war, and forbids its followers to hold civil office." [1]

Bayle's prophecy has hardly been fulfilled; perhaps because the "few princes" were not forthcoming, perhaps because this hostility to war and to civil affairs told too severely against the young faith. Socinianism, in its original form, no more exists to-day than does Arianism, or Athanasianism. Yet it has its legitimate successors, some of which we are now to notice.

By a singular historical caprice, the next name to be mentioned in this connection, is of one who had hardly more leaning towards Unitarianism than had Calvin or Luther, who dissented from Orthodoxy on a wholly different issue, yet on whom an unkind fate has laid the burden of Socinian error, and who, in spite of himself, has to be enumerated among the fathers of our liberal faith. The name by which the early Unitarians of America were known, was Arminian; and to many intelligent minds to-day, Arminianism and Socinianism are quite indistinguishable terms. Let us do them both the justice of seeing in what the true connection between them lies.

Arminius [2] was the son of a Dutch cutler, received his education partly in Leyden, partly in Geneva, where he was well taught in the doctrines of Calvinism, and was at first settled as a pastor in Amsterdam, in 1588, at a time

[1] Bayle's Dict. p. 2609.

[2] 1560–1609.

when Holland was almost equally divided between Lutheranism and Calvinism. The point in controversy between the two churches at that time, and just then coming to open issue, was the old Augustinian doctrine of Predestination. Between the two reformers themselves, there would seem to have been less difference in this doctrine than they themselves admitted; as Luther said in criticising Erasmus, "The human will is like a beast of burden. If God mounts it, it works and goes as God wills; if Satan mounts it, it works and goes as Satan wills. Nor can it choose the rider it would prefer, or betake itself to him, but it is the riders who contend for its possession." "God foreknows nothing subject to contingencies, but he foresees, foreordains, and accomplishes all things by an unchanging, eternal, and efficacious will."[1] As between their followers, however, the Lutherans held that each soul was predestined to happiness or misery, on the ground that God foresaw that it would deserve the one fate or the other; while the Calvinists, following Augustine more closely, regarded Predestination, whether to happiness or misery, as a purely arbitrary act on God's part, unconditioned by anything in the soul itself.[2]

Arminius, who was called upon to take the prominent place in this dispute, and to throw the weight of his rare learning and eloquence on the side of Calvinism, found himself, to his own great surprise, unable to do so, and ended by accepting the opinions he was expected to

[1] Quoted by Lecky, i. 385.

[2] Comp. McClin. and Strong's Bib. Cyclopædia, i. 414.

refute: His views do not seem to have been, at first, very outspoken; as in 1604 he was made professor in the University of Leyden, and two years afterwards its rector; but his coming to the University was the signal for a renewal of the strife, and after passing through one of the bitterest controversies of even that bitter and controversial age, he finally proposed, and left behind him at his death, in 1609, the series of doctrines which, with slight modifications by his followers, have since borne his name.

The tenor of these doctrines, which concern themselves almost exclusively with what seemed to the angry disputants the whole of Christianity, the question of Predestination, can be best judged by these brief extracts from Arminius's "Declaration of Sentiments," published the year before his death. "God decreed to save and damn particular persons because he knew from all eternity who would believe and persevere, and who would not believe and persevere." "In his lapsed and sinful state, man is not capable of and by himself either to think, will, or to do what is good; it is necessary for him to be regenerated by God in Christ, through the Holy Spirit." On this point, especially as it relates to Free Will and Grace, Arminius showed singular anxiety that his orthodoxy should be understood. "Grace is essential," he declared; "I ascribe to Grace the beginning, continuation, and consummation of all good."[1] His nearest approach to heresy was in the doctrine of Christ, in regard to which he was very sensitive, having been made the object, as he

[1] Writings of Arminius, Nicholls, i. 248, 252, 253.

said, of "notorious calumnies." "Christ is truly God," according to Arminius, yet is not "underived," or "absolute God" (if that be the exact shade of Deity which Orthodoxy expresses by "autotheos"). If the Son is in strict sense autotheos, he is the Father. "The ancient church," he insisted, has always taught that "the Son has his Deity from the Father by eternal generation;" in other words, is subordinate to the Father.[1] "To be Son and to be God are at perfect agreement."[2] After announcing his acceptance of Calvin's doctrine "that Christ's merits are the sole cause for which God pardons sins,"[3] he returns once more to the question of Christ's nature, and says, "You know with what deep fear, and with what conscientious solicitude I treat that sublime doctrine of a Trinity of Persons." "God is from eternity. The Father is from no one. The Son is from the Father."[4]

This very mild departure from Orthodoxy, which to us seems so trivial and so wearisome, was sufficient to keep the States of Holland in furious agitation for ten years after the death of Arminius. At the Synod of Dort, held in 1618–19, which, like some of the councils of earlier and holier ages, is charged with having been so made up that its decision was secure in advance, Calvinism was proclaimed the doctrine of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, and three hundred of the Arminian or *Remonstrant* clergy were expelled from the country.[5]

[1] Writings of Arminius, i. p. 258. [2] Id. p. 261. [3] Id. p. 264.
[4] Apology against thirty-one Defamatory Articles, p. 343.
[5] Hase's History, p. 416.

A few years later, under more favorable political conditions, the exiles returned; and since that time Arminianism has been fully tolerated in Holland, beside going abroad to temper the rigor of Calvinism in other lands. It is to-day the doctrine of the entire Methodist church, beside having a large following in the church of England, and among the Lutherans in Germany.[1]

It is quite clear from the above account that, in its primitive form, Arminianism had as little connection as possible with Socinianism, either in its dogmas, or in its spirit. Yet one heresy makes another easy. As a simple matter of fact, the Arminian clergy of Holland, though dwindling in numbers, are tending constantly to greater freedom of thought on all religious themes, and are known now to reject all creeds and confessions, and to hold very advanced views on Scripture interpretation, the Trinity, and the Sacraments.[2] In many sects, Arminianism has proved the stepping-stone to a larger liberty and broader faith.

One point is still to be touched upon before my subject is complete. I have shown at how early a period of the Reformation, and under how many different forms, Unitarianism appeared; it remains to be seen how it took the form under which we are familiar with it, in England and America.

Socinian doctrines seem to have been somewhat slow in reaching England; yet in 1665, Dr. Owen wrote of them: "The evil is at the door; there is not a city, a

[1] McClintock and Strong, i. 417. [2] Giesler, iv. 513.

town, scarce a village in England wherein some of this poison is not poured forth." The assertion of another writer, in 1705, that there were "troops of Unitarian and Socinian writers and not one dissenter among them," would indicate that the dogmatic indifference of the established church had given free entrance to heretical ideas; while Presbyterianism, in refusing to commit itself to any doctrinal system, exposed itself to the same infection, and prepared the way for the avowed Unitarianism of the eighteenth century.[1]

The formal appearance of what had been so long secretly approaching, was simple and uneventful in the extreme. In 1774, Dr. Lindsey, who had resigned a charge in the church of England, became pastor of a Unitarian congregation in Essex Street, London; and thus the Unitarian movement, in so far as any single incident constituted its beginning, was initiated. A still more important apostle it found, however, in Joseph Priestley, who, in 1755, had become pastor of a small dissenting congregation in Suffolk, and was already conspicuous as a champion of humitarian theology. Priestley was born in 1733, and had been educated as a Calvinist, but before he was nineteen claimed to be "rather a believer in the doctrines of Arminius," adding, however, "I had by no means rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, or that of the Atonement."[2] At about the same time he was refused admission to a Calvinist communion, because he could not agree that "all the human

[1] Chambers' Encyc., art. "Unitarians." [2] Chamb. Encyc.

race were liable to the wrath of God and the pains of hell forever, on account of the sin of Adam only."[1] After entering the ministry, his views took, as has been said, a distinctively humanitarian form, although, at the same time, he retained positive belief in the New Testament miracles, as the credentials of Christ's mission. Starting with the assumption that the Bible is a divine revelation, and rejecting carefully what seemed to him merely ecclesiastical interpretations of Bible passages, he rejected the Trinity and Atonement as unscriptural, and held that Christ himself claimed to be man and nothing more.[2]

Priestley's theology shows but little spiritual depth, and his highest distinction was won rather in science than in religion; yet his open advocacy of Unitarian views, and the respectful hearing which he won for them, while they were still hated and condemned, and while bringing upon himself bitter obloquy and persecution as well as loss of scientific preferment, entitle him to a high place among the leaders of our faith. His career, as is well known, was a troubled one, and shows that the days of Protestant persecution, which began with Luther and Calvin, were not yet wholly past. Like Socinus before him, he lost his books, manuscripts, and philosophical instruments, at the hands of a religious mob; and finally, through the combined influence of political and theologic hatred, he was virtually banished from his native land. In 1792, he removed to America,

[1] Ware's Priestley's Views, p. viii.

[2] Comp. Chamb. Encyc., "Priestley."

where he was received with great respect, and where he lived long enough to add fresh stimulus to the young Unitarianism which was just bursting the bonds of New England Episcopacy and Puritanism.

Unitarianism in America, as in England, sprang from several roots. In 1787, the oldest Episcopal church in New England, King's Chapel in Boston, erased from its Prayer Book and Articles all Trinitarian Confessions, and became, under James Freeman, the first Unitarian church in America. It retains the Liturgical service to this day, having carried a few steps further the revision of the Catholic ritual begun by Cranmer. In a letter to Dr. Lindsey in London, whose withdrawal from the established church had occurred but a few years before, Freeman wrote that there was only one minister in New England who openly preached the "Socinian Scheme," although there were many churches in which the worship was strictly Unitarian, and some of New England's most eminent laymen openly avowed that creed.[1] Many other New England churches followed the example of King's Chapel. Among the rest, in 1801, the oldest Puritan church in New England or America, the original church of the Mayflower, established in Plymouth in 1620, declared itself, by the vote of a large majority, in sympathy with the new liberal movement, and assumed the Unitarian name. Indeed, its heresy was prepared for it in advance; for so simple had been the terms of the Covenant adopted by the early colonists, that not a

[1] Gannett's Memoir of Ezra Stiles Gannett, p. 39.

letter had to be changed in taking the Unitarian position. The church uses to-day the identical statement of faith drawn up by its Pilgrim founders. Still earlier than this, in 1786, the society which I am now addressing had withdrawn, on the ground of its Arminian faith, from the First Parish of Worcester, and was ready among the first to take part in the schismatic movement which could not be long delayed.

Protestant Orthodoxy had learned little from the past. It still honestly supposed itself to have a church and dogmatic system of its own, any departure from which was heresy; and therefore, instead of welcoming the new theological movement, it forced it into the position of dissent. About the year 1815, the new views had spread so rapidly, and the Orthodox opposition to them had become so determined, that no alternative remained but for the congregations which had taken an independent position, to separate formally from their sister churches, and call themselves by a distinctive name. The spread of the movement through the State of Massachusetts was instantaneous; and the lofty eloquence and noble humanity of Channing and other early leaders of the cause left the question no longer in doubt whether Unitarianism had a place in the Protestant church.

It is no part of my purpose to defend the rights of Unitarianism, yet I trust that the foregoing statement has shown this simple fact, — that Unitarianism stands on precisely the same footing with the other heretical bodies of Protestantism; that, with an origin quite as

ancient, and an ancestry quite as noble, it is simply carrying into remoter realms of Christian truth that independent exercise of human reason, that spirit of rationalism, without which Protestantism itself could have had no being.

April 12, 1874.

X.

RELIGION AND DOGMA.

THE course of lectures now closing, in directly answering one question, has aided indirectly, I trust, in answering another. If it has clearly traced the development of Christian doctrines from the beginning, it has helped us to determine in what relation Christian doctrine in general stands to the Christian religion. As we are now for the first time in a position to consider this point, I invite you this evening to take one more glance with me over the ground which we have traversed, that we may see to what conclusions we are brought. What relation do the doctrines of Christianity hold to Christianity itself?

The point from which we started, you will perhaps remember, was this; that the Scriptures themselves contain two distinct conceptions of Christ's nature. While the first three Gospels present Christ as simply the Jewish Messiah, and ascribe to him purely human attributes, the fourth Gospel and Paul's epistles present him as a pre-existent and spiritual being, with certain divine attributes, and standing in peculiar relation to God. These two conceptions, which divided the Chris-

tian community before the Scriptures were written, introduced naturally an element of disunion into all the early churches; and we accordingly find in the Christian writings of the first three centuries, the most conflicting views concerning the nature of Christ. On the one hand, are writers like Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Tertullian, who carry Paul's thought to much greater lengths, consider Christ a subordinate deity, and find much fault with those who call him "a mere man;" on the other hand, writers like Paul of Samosata, who reproduce the primitive idea of Christ held by the Apostles at Jerusalem, insist that Jesus was born human, even if he became afterwards divine, and charge their opponents, when calling Christ God, with making two gods. How to call Christ man, on the one hand, without robbing him of all spiritual functions and degrading him to the mere office of a Jewish Messiah, how to call him divine, on the other hand, without making two gods, was the main religious problem of the first three centuries. To aid this controversy, or complicate it, came in certain phrases and conceptions, from Oriental and Greek philosophy, concerning the "Word" or "Logos" as emanating eternally from God; and somewhat later, the Greek idea of a threefold personality in the divine nature, which, when once suggested, took strong hold of the Christian imagination, and assumed very different forms at the hands of a Tertullian, an Origen, and a Sabellius.

The first mention of a trinity in the divine nature, or of any threefold conception in connection with Deity,

we found, just at the end of the second century, in the writings of Tertullian. Although the idea of Christ as in some sense a god, had been for some time familiar, yet none of the writers of that period seem to have thought of a third divine element, until the idea was suggested by Tertullian to meet an obvious difficulty. If Christ was a god, there was danger, of course, of either identifying him with the absolute God, and so losing sight of Christ's personality, or of so separating the two Gods as to fall into polytheism. Both these results actually followed; and, whether influenced by this danger or not, it was in answer to a writer who spoke of "God himself as born of the Virgin," that Tertullian, unprepared for so gross a doctrine, first broached the conception of a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who constitute what he calls a "unity distributed into a trinity." These chance words of Tertullian, on which he very briefly dwelt, and to which he gave no complete or systematic form, proved to be the first expression of a theory which, under many modifications, and after prolonged controversy, was finally adopted as the doctrine of Christendom concerning the relation of Christ to God.

The settlement of the doctrine was reached, and its first official statement made, as we have seen, by a series of church councils, held between the years 325 and 451. The steps toward this end were the following: —

In 325, the first General Council was called at Nicæa to determine the questions which arose out of the Arian strife. In opposition to Arius, who, while calling Christ

God, had yet declared him not begotten out of the substance of the Father, but created by the Father, the Council of Nicæa pronounced the Son consubstantial and coeternal with the Father; but propounded no doctrine as to the relation of the Holy Spirit to God, or as to the exact nature of Christ. Next came the Second General Council, at Constantinople, in 381, at which, in consequence of controversies which had sprung out of the decisions at Nicæa, it was further declared that the Holy Spirit is coequal with the Father and the Son. But still one important and very troublesome point had been left undecided by both Nicæa and Constantinople; the relation between the human and divine natures in Christ himself. If in being God, Christ ceased to be man, that is, if his human nature was lost in the divine, then it was the Infinite God who was born, suffered, and died. If Christ was both God and man, then were there not two Christs? After another century of angry controversy, and after two successive councils, in one of which the doctrine of two natures in Christ was pronounced heresy under the name of Nestorianism, in the other of which the doctrine of one nature in Christ was pronounced heresy under the name of Eutychianism, it was finally decided at the Fourth General Council, at Chalcedon, in 451, that although each of these separate doctrines is false, yet both are true; in other words, that Christ, although not two beings, nor yet one, is both two and one; that he has two natures in one person.

These doctrines concerning Christ, of course, although

the most important, were by no means the only ones in controversy during those early centuries. On the contrary, each Christian dogma was to be found in that period in the process of formation. Prominent among these, and the only other doctrine to which I called your attention, was that relating to human nature. As in regard to the nature of Christ we found, in the pages of the early Fathers, the most varied and conflicting views, so in regard to the nature of man. That the human race had been in some way corrupted by Adam's fall, was generally granted; but how it was corrupted, or what share, if any, the race in general had in Adam's guilt, was left undecided until the fifth century, when the whole question was brought to an issue by the monk Pelagius, who declared, as most of the Fathers had done before him, that Adam's sin acted upon the race only as a bad example, and that every man can be just as good or just as bad as he chooses. Whether this doctrine, even then, would have been pronounced heresy, is more than doubtful, had it not been for the potent influence, just at this juncture, of Augustine, whose Manichæan training and supreme belief in the supernatural efficacy of the church, led him to frame out of Paul's language, and out of the old conceptions, the doctrine of man's natural depravity, and entire inability to escape from sin, except through God's unmerited grace, working through the miraculous agency of the church. In the year 418, as we have seen, the Council of Carthage adopted the Augus-

tinian theory of Original Sin, Total Depravity, and Free Grace, and pronounced the opposite doctrines, held up to that time by most of the prominent Christian teachers, heretical.

From these single instances of the formation of Christian doctrine, we learned the process by which all Christian doctrine has been formed. What was true of these, was equally true of every other dogma which Christendom confesses. No single dogma being found, as such, in the primitive Scriptures, each one in turn has waited to be moulded by religious controversy, and to receive its final form at the hands of an ecclesiastical council. Christian doctrines are simply the various decisions of these councils called from time to time to declare which of two conflicting opinions, held by different church teachers, was right, and which wrong.

The next question, therefore, which we had to consider, was this; what were these councils which, by a mere vote, determined forever the faith of Christendom? Councils, we found, were simply a gathering of bishops representing what called itself the Catholic church. Their sole authority lay in their being the mouthpiece of the church.

The question was pushed still further back, therefore. There is a Catholic church, it seems. What is it? Whence did it come? When begin to exist? The decrees of Nicæa, Constantinople, Chalcedon, Carthage, are entitled to respect only as this Catholic church can prove its claim to authority and its right to speak for Christendom. What, then, and whence, is the Catholic

church? Not an institution founded by Jesus, certainly, as a single glance at the Scriptures proves to us. Not part of primitive Christianity, therefore. Not founded by the Apostles either; there were churches in apostolic times, but no church. As late as the end of the first century, each congregation made and unmade its own officers, and bishops as distinct from elders were still unknown. Hardly before the third century did we find mention of "the one only baptism of the one church." Even then its organization was not complete, and many essential features were lacking. At the time of the early councils, no one bishop was supreme above the rest. Not until the fifth century did the bishop of Rome claim precedence among his fellows. In the seventh century the bishop of Rome and the patriarch of Constantinople were still contending with each other for the title of universal bishop. Not until the nineteenth century was there an infallible head of the infallible church.

The church came gradually into being, therefore. It was eighteen hundred and seventy years in reaching its growth. It came into being expressly to meet the demand for infallibility. The Scriptures themselves admitting of various interpretations, and leaving many grave questions in doubt, unity of faith was impossible without some infallible interpreter of Scripture, and some supreme authority to establish the articles of faith. If there must be doctrines, there must be something to sanction doctrines. Hence the church; growing constantly more compact as necessity required; assuming step by step a

larger authority, as that authority was needed. If it can be said, as it certainly may, that the necessities of dogma created the church, it must also be said that the church alone creates and sanctions dogma.

Doctrinal Christianity, therefore, culminates in the Catholic church. Without that church, as we have seen, there would be no Christian doctrines. Doctrines are the voice of the church. The two cannot be separated. Insist upon having doctrines, and you must have the Catholic church; deny the authority of the Catholic church, and you remove the basis of all doctrine. You cannot discriminate between the two, and hold to the one while you disown the other. You cannot accept the church and discard its doctrines; no more can you retain the doctrines while you renounce the church. Whatever beliefs you retain on leaving the church are simply your individual opinions; they are no longer established dogmas.

This is a point which the Protestant reformers failed to see. They thought they could go out of the church, deny the authority of the pope, and yet retain the Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement, as binding doctrines.[1] But this could not be. The doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, and Atonement, rest on precisely the same authority as does the doctrine of the supremacy of the pope; that is upon decrees of Catholic councils. To renounce the supremacy of the pope, therefore, is to renounce the authority on which all doctrines rest, and by which alone

[1] Comp. Confessio Augustana, Part i. art. xxi.

doctrinal unity is possible. To leave the church was to leave unity of faith and all dogmatic authority behind. To leave the church and carry off its dogmas with them, was at best to rob the mansion which they were deserting.

This is what I meant by saying, in one of my lectures, that Catholicism and Orthodoxy are synonymous and convertible terms. It is literally so. There can be Catholic orthodoxy; there can be, in the nature of the case, no Protestant orthodoxy. Protestantism is in itself the denial of the one authority on which orthodoxy is based; is itself, therefore, the negation of orthodoxy. Protestantism may amuse itself, if it chooses, with claiming an orthodoxy of its own; Protestant sects may amuse themselves, if amusement it be, in summoning councils, and chastising rebellious churches, and excommunicating heretics; but it is an idle pastime, which deceives no one, and carries its absurdity on its face. If there be a Protestant orthodoxy, what is it? If there be a Protestant church, where is it? I, at least, know of neither the one nor the other. I know of no creed which all Protestantism confesses, I know of no single article of any creed which all Protestant bodies accept; I know of no single Protestant confession which all who receive it understand in the same way.

The name Protestant Orthodoxy, therefore, is a complete misnomer; and ought, in all candor, to be quietly laid aside. Protestantism is heresy. Its very essence is heresy. It is rooted in heresy; it is fed by heresy; it bears forever the fruits of heresy. Its very function is to

initiate heresy, and legitimate it as the lawful outgrowth of Christianity. Protestantism is the authority of the individual soul as against the authority of the church; and the authority of the soul is heresy. Heresy is "choice;" the soul choosing its religious belief, and holding it as its own. Behold the end of the whole matter; — the church against the soul; the pope against human nature; orthodoxy against heresy.

All Protestants, then, are heretics. If they are called Servetus or Socinus, they are heretics; if they are called Luther or Calvin, they are heretics as well. If they deny Trinity, Atonement, and Eternal Punishment, they are heretics; if they accept Trinity, Atonement, and Eternal Punishment, they are heretics as well; for they can accept them only upon the authority of their own reason. In speaking of the several parties into which Protestantism at once and inevitably fell, I have recognized this fact, and classed them under one head, as so many dissenters from the orthodox faith. On this common ground all Protestant bodies stand to-day; the only essential distinction between them being that while some frankly accept, others angrily disown, the stigma of heresy.

This brings clearly before us the one remaining question which, as I have said, it has been the ulterior purpose of the present course to meet. What is the relation between Christianity itself and Christian doctrines? As we have already seen, if those doctrines are an essential part of our faith, if orthodoxy of belief is a necessary part of Christianity, then we must have the Catholic church.

Does it not follow then that Catholicism is right and Protestantism wrong?

Certainly, I reply: unless we are prepared for the other horn of the dilemma. Let the alternative be stated as sharply as possible, for it must be fairly met. Either Catholicism is right, or doctrine is not essential to Christianity. As true Protestants, of course, our choice is clear. We hold Protestantism to be right; therefore we must conclude that doctrine is not essential to Christianity. There can be a pure and true Christian faith without Christian doctrines; without any verbal statements, that is, in which all are forced to unite. I urge this upon you as the legitimate teaching of the Protestant Reformation; Doctrine is not an essential part of Christianity, else Catholicism is right and Protestantism wrong.

No one will deny that there is a difference between religion and doctrine; between spiritual truths on the one side and mental belief on the other. No one will deny that religion in its purest form can be held without formulating any system of belief. Will any one deny that Christianity is such a religion? No one pretends that primitive Christianity contained any statement of belief. Christianity was content to be a religion, without attempting to become a belief. The Christian Scriptures presented the new faith, and left it, in the form in which it found its first and natural utterance; in the words and acts and lives of its early apostles. Those words and acts might be variously understood, variously felt, variously applied, and might lead to the utmost diversity of thought

and belief. They did produce that diversity among the immediate followers of Jesus themselves. No more vital difference of opinion has ever separated the Christian world, than that which separated Peter from Paul, or Paul from James. Yet no provision was made against this, nor any steps taken against it. The primitive Gospel was left to do its legitimate work; to inspire the souls of men with high purpose and devout aspiration and great longings, and lead them into whatever diversity of thought and interpretation it might.

No one can deny that this is so; else, why is it that when Christian doctrines are formed, they are not given us in the words of the Scriptures themselves? Why is it that Christian doctrines and creeds are formed at all? The putting of a single great Christian truth into a doctrine is a confession that the Christian Scriptures contain no doctrine. The simple fact that no single creed, either from the Catholic or from the Protestant side, has ever been drawn bodily from the Scriptures, or couched exclusively in Scripture phrases, is conclusive proof that doctrine is not part of, and therefore not essential to, pure Christianity. Either Christianity was defective at the start, in a most important point, or doctrine is not an important part of it, but only a superfluous addition.

Christian doctrine is a superfluous addition to the Christian religion. It was an afterthought. When the early faith began to bear its legitimate fruits in variety of thought and belief, the leaders of the church became alarmed. The unity of Christian faith, the authority of

the church, was endangered. That the soul is best employed when it is following its own convictions, and is safest in making its own approaches to God, they could not see. They only felt the immediate danger to outward unity. Hence the specific dogma, officially uttered, which all must accept. Hence the addition to the original faith, of a verbal confession, and a command to accept it. At first a single doctrine only, to meet a single necessity, it became in time a systematic series of dogmas, involving a complete extra-biblical Scheme of Salvation. At first the mere vote of a majority of bishops, and carrying simply the weight of numbers, doctrine has become at last the infallible utterance of a divinely commissioned church.

Such was the origin of Christian doctrine; an origin entirely outside of primitive Christianity, and independent of the action of its founders. Christianity itself gives no countenance to this treatment of its truths, offers no preparation for it, supplies no material for it. Christianity itself places every possible obstacle in the way of such treatment. Never was a religious faith harder to formulate; never was the essence of a religion harder to catch and hold; never did specific statements of truth stand in greater need of restatement; never did interpretations more imperatively demand to be themselves interpreted. Never was the fine spirit of a lofty message more rudely misconceived, than by those who sought to imprison the ethereal truths of Christianity in the soulless phrases of a creed.

And the endeavor was fruitless after all. Brilliant as

seemed at first its success, the hour of reckoning came, and the pure religion vindicated itself against all its perversions and corruptions. The outburst of the Reformation, and the instant falling asunder of Protestantism into a hundred different faiths, meant that the power of dogma is transient, and that there is no permanent religious authority outside the soul. For the wise man no experiment need be twice tried. For fifteen hundred years, the Christian world tried the experiment, under circumstances the most favorable possible, of turning Christianity into a creed; of distrusting reason and providing an infallible authority for the soul; of erasing all theological differences, and effecting unity of belief. The experiment failed disastrously. If we are wise, we shall accept the failure and not repeat the experiment. If we are wise, we shall accept the fact and acknowledge its full significance. It means that dogma is no essential part of religion. It means, not that this doctrine or that is false, but that doctrine as such carries no final authority for the soul. It means that Christianity is really, what it seemed two thousand years ago, not a verbal system, but a religion; and that if it be true religion, it must necessarily lead us constantly into new and nobler beliefs.

To this conclusion, therefore, we are brought; a conclusion which cannot be too succinctly or too simply stated. The future of Protestantism, if future it has, must needs be one of increasing intellectual differences, and constantly multiplying views of spiritual things. The function of Protestantism, if function it has, is, once for all

and with pride, to accept this diversity of faith as its essential characteristic; to forget the terms orthodox and heretic; to devote itself henceforth to the moral elevation of humanity, and to growth into an ever larger and diviner truth.

April 26, 1874.

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